

“Bound by Faith”

**A biographic and ecclesiastic examination (1898-1967) of
Chief Albert Luthuli’s stance on violence as a strategy to
liberate South Africa**

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DECLARATION

I, Scott E. Couper, declare that this PhD dissertation entitled "Bound by Faith"
Autobiographic Examination is my original and independent research. It has not been previously
 submitted for any degree, and is not being concurrently presented in candidature in any other
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Abstract

Much public historical mythology asserts that Chief Albert Luthuli, the one-time leader of Africa's oldest liberation movement, launched an armed struggle on the very eve he returned to South Africa after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. This profound irony engenders what is arguably one of the most relevant and controversial historical debates in South African as some recent scholarship suggests Luthuli did *not* countenance the armed movement. Today, Luthuli remains a figure of great contestation due to his domestic and international prominence and impeccable moral character. Icons of the liberation struggle, political parties and active politicians understand their justification for past actions and their contemporary relevance to be dependent upon a given historical memory of Luthuli. Often that memory is not compatible with the archival record.

Contrary to a nationalist inspired historical perspective, this investigation concludes that Luthuli did not support the initiation of violence in December 1961. Evidence suggests that Luthuli only reluctantly yielded to the formation (not the initiation) of an armed movement months *before* the announcement in October 1961 that he would be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1961. *After* the announcement, Luthuli vociferously argued against the use of violence until April 1962. From April 1962 to his death in 1967, Luthuli only advocated non-violent methods and did not publicly support or condemn the use of violence.

Congregationalism imbedded within Luthuli the primacy of democracy, education, multiracialism and egalitarianism, propelling him to the heights of political leadership prior to 1961. Following 1961 these same seminal emphases rendered Luthuli obsolete as a political leader within an increasingly radicalised, desperate and violent environment. The author argues that not only did the government drastically curtail Luthuli's ability to lead, but so did his colleagues in the underground structures of the Congresses' liberation movement, rendering him only the titular leader of the African National Congress until his death. While Luthuli's Christian faith provided the vigour for his political success, it engendered the inertia for his political irrelevance following the launch of violence. By not supporting the African National Congress' initiation of the violent movement, Luthuli's political career proved to be 'bound by faith'.

Preface

Two Approaches

There appear to be two approaches in ANC history. The dominant and older tradition of non-violence was part of its initial political philosophy in 1912, reached its best manifestation in the life and approach of Lutuli, and continued after his death. The other approach of armed struggle was a development after 1960 and was continued by the military wing during the exile of the ANC. Lutuli was among those who maintained the non-violent approach even when the armed struggle began. Lutuli expressed his understanding of why some had chosen the option of violence without adopting the view that the policy of the ANC had radically changed.

--Gerald Pillay¹

Practical Example

In February 2004, I received a submission from the South African government's (Ministry of Arts and Culture) consultative historian for the Chief Albert Luthuli Legacy Project recommending changes to a text soon to be engraved in granite at the Groutville Congregational Church where Luthuli served as a lay-preacher and deacon.² One quotation under the heading "Religious Leader" (Theology), in a perceived relation to a second quotation under the heading "National Leader" (Politics), raised special concern for the historian. The concerned quotations by Luthuli read:

My own beliefs as I have already said are to a certain extent motivated by Christian leanings. Because of my Christian leanings I would hesitate to be a party to violence...³

¹ Gerald Pillay, ed., *Voices of Liberation: Albert Luthuli* (Pretoria: Human Science Research Council, 1993), 1: 30.

Here, as in some other sources, "Luthuli" is spelled "Lutuli". Luthuli often signed his correspondences "Lutuli". Other members of Luthuli's family have always spelled their surname "Luthuli" and found it peculiar, then and now, that Luthuli omitted the "h". Most secondary sources include an "h". In this study, I include an "h" in my text. Nevertheless, I do not change the spelling of Luthuli's name from "Lutuli" to "Luthuli" if I am quoting a source that does not include an "h".

² The quotations inscribed on the text mural were not referenced nor listed in any chronological order. The quotations were only associated together according to theme (Community, Religious, National and International Leader).

³ "Excerpts from Chief Albert Luthuli's evidence at the Treason Trial (1956-1961) dealing with his understanding of a non-violent liberation struggle". Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 154.

...in the face of the uncompromising White refusal to abandon a policy which denies the African and other oppressed South Africans their rightful heritage – freedom – no one can blame brave just men for seeking justice by the use of violent methods; nor could they be blamed if they tried to create an organised force in order ultimately to establish peace and racial harmony.⁴

The historian recommended:

I would like to suggest that we drop [the first] quotation...especially because it is quoted out of context. It does not capture the entire statement that Luthuli issued in 1964, and also gives an impression that he was condemning Mandela and others at the end of the Rivonia Trial. I particularly feel that it will feed into stereotypes that would do Luthuli [more] harm than good: Can we truly suggest that Luthuli publicly criticised the armed struggle? Are we suggesting that Mandela and Kotane were liars? Furthermore, the rest of the statement (appears as the last quotation under politics in this document) gives a different picture altogether. Let us not create confusion. Drop this quote and retain the last one under politics.⁵

The historian's recommendation, and subsequent rationale, to retain the quotation that possibly infers Luthuli's support of violence and to delete the quotation that indicated Luthuli expressed a reservation to resort to violence to advance the struggle for freedom inspired this investigation. The recommendation can be construed to be unsympathetic to many suppositions that are made in this study such as: 'Luthuli did not support the decision to *form or launch Umkhonto we Sizwe* ("Spear of the Nation", *MK*)'; 'an interpretation that Luthuli disagreed with other

⁴ Following the "Rivonia Trial" (1963-1964) on 12 June 1964, Luthuli issued this statement when the court sentenced Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathada, Govan Mbeki, Dennis Goldberg, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni to life imprisonment. Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 152.

⁵ The historian accurately perceived a disjuncture. More than "out of context", the above quotations by Luthuli derive from two very different contexts. The second quotation seemingly inferring support for a violent method originated from a statement made by Luthuli after the Rivonia Trial. The first quotation stating support for a non-violent option originated from his testimony at the Treason Trial four years earlier. Both quotations were taken from Pillay's book that misleadingly included the "excerpts from...the treason trial" (lower case) immediately after Pillay's section on Luthuli's Rivonia Trial statement (153). The structure of Pillay's text is chronological. Therefore, a reader may easily mistake the two quotations within the same section as contemporaneous. Pillay did not indicate a date associated with the Treason Trial excerpts nor is a reference for the testimony provided in the bibliography of primary sources (163-7). Luthuli gave evidence at the Treason Trial in March and April of 1960.

Correspondence to Brian Xaba of the Department of Arts and Culture (Heritage Division: Legacy Projects) entitled, "Comments on Reverend Couper's Submissions", 22 February 2004.

It must be noted that, though in writing, the historian commented extemporaneously and thus informally. Therefore, the comments of concern should not be inappropriately construed as "on the record", formal or publishable historical queries. Hence, I omit the historian's name.

African National Congress (ANC) members who decided to engage in violence does not foster a negative stereotype tarnishing Luthuli's legacy and image for posterity nor does it encourage a critique of Luthuli's leadership style as weak, conservative, accommodating and unresolved'; 'Luthuli's refusal to condemn "brave men for seeking justice by the use of violent methods"' did not imply Luthuli supported their methods'; 'questioning or revisiting historical assumptions does not engender "confusion"' and 'censorship of contrasting realities homogenises South Africa's liberation history leading to an uninformed and misguided society'.⁶

In the end, both quotations were engraved and today can be read on a large text mural adjacent to Luthuli's final resting place. I felt strongly that neither quotation should be excised, for both quotations raise fundamental questions regarding a man who belongs in the pantheon of great human rights leaders of the twentieth century. Furthermore, historians, even nascent ones, ought to question assumptions, particularly assumptions that deal with issues related to a Nobel Peace Prize-winner and the process that led to the birth of a democratic country.⁷ Ernest Renan reminds us that "Forgetting history, or even getting it wrong, is an essential factor in the formation of a nation".⁸ Archbishop Trevor Huddleston once commented, "History is never simply a chronicle of the past. It is always a challenge to contemporary thought for the future".⁹

Secular or Religious Motivation

In 2004 and 2005, the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, and the former President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, respectively, gave the Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Mbeki waxed eloquent about

⁶ I stress the word "may", as the historian did not and does not necessarily disagree with any of the above five suppositions. In fact, I suspect s/he would agree with many or all of them. I utilise the historian's recommendation, subsequent comments and rhetorical questions simply as a foundational example upon which to question general assumptions and to formulate the thesis posited in this study.

⁷ At the February 2005 launching of a documentary on Chief Albert Luthuli at the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), Dr. Pallo Jordan, Minister of Arts and Culture aptly questioned at the end of his address, "What are you, as a South African, doing to ensure that Luthuli's legacy lives?" Though not South African and without writing a hagiography, this study is my humble attempt to ensure Luthuli's legacy lives.

Pallo Jordan, "Address at the Launch of the Chief Albert Luthuli Film, NFVF", Johannesburg, 25 February 2005, 7.

⁸ Quoted in: "The Legacy of a Legend: Chief Albert J. M. Luthuli", documentary film, produced by the National Film and Video Foundation, sponsored by the Department of Arts and Culture, 2005.

⁹ Luli Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2004), 8.

Luthuli's life and his relevance to South African history. Mbeki's speech was typically cerebral, disembodied and interspersed with quotations from international poets (Pablo Neruda and Jonathan Swift), philosophers (John Mill and Amilcar Cabral) and historians (Michael McNulty, Adam Hochschild and Noel Mostert) that emphasised lofty 'universal' concepts and ideals. Kaunda's speech proved very different to his predecessor's. Kaunda's offering was simple, embodied and, one might say, parochial. In his untitled address, Kaunda quoted no poets, philosophers or historians. The only quotation Kaunda used derived from Martin Luther King, Jr. Another difference is worthy of note. Whereas Mbeki only once mentioned Luthuli's Christian "prescriptions", Kaunda, for half his speech, belaboured the influence of faith that was unarguably the foundation of Luthuli's politics.¹⁰ Kaunda's emphasis on the seminal role Christianity had upon Luthuli, intended, perhaps, to challenge the African National Congress' (ANC) nationalist understanding that Luthuli supported the 16 December 1961 decision to initiate violence to achieve South Africa's liberation.¹¹ Kaunda stated:

Given his deep belief in non-violence, it can rightly be assumed that [Luthuli] clearly understood that in their journey to attain justice, freedom and nationhood, different tactical options may be preferred by various wings of the same struggle. It is important however, to stress the fact that, in spite of this pronouncement, he continued with his method of non-violence campaign (sic) to his death.¹²

¹⁰ Such a Christian emphasis reveals Kaunda's bias. Kaunda's father was an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland. Born in 1924 at Lubwa Mission in northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Christian theology and education undoubtedly had a profound affect on Kaunda. Such a Christian emphasis also reveals my own bias, as I am an ecclesiastical and vocational descendant of ordained Congregational missionaries who served the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the indigenous people of what is now 'Kwazulu-Natal'.

¹¹ In chapter three, I define and provide examples of what I understand to be 'nationalist' history production.

Throughout this study, 'nationalist', with a lower case 'n', refers to an orientation towards national independence and/or to patriotism.

Throughout this study, 'National Party', with a capital 'N' is synonymous with the Apartheid regime. In this study, I often corrected those who incorrectly refer to the 'National Party' as the 'Nationalist Party'. Nevertheless, I did not alter in quotations the term frequently used term 'Nationalist'.

¹² Kenneth Kaunda, no title, in Desirath Chetty and Deanne Collins, eds., *The Deepest International Principles of Brotherhood and Humanity: The Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture*, 21 October 2005, (Durban: Public Affairs and Corporate Communications, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2005), 22. In his October 2007 keynote lecture, Joaquim Chissano, the former President of the Republic of Mozambique, also implied that Luthuli held no other policy against Apartheid other than "non-violent struggle". Chissano affirmed that Luthuli had "detractors", presumably within the ANC, who "condemned his policy of non-violent struggle" and in December 1961 deviated from the policy for which he earned the Nobel Peace Prize.

An example of a common and self-contradictory nationalist articulation of South African history propagated since Luthuli's death in 1967 came from the Premier of the Kwazulu-Natal Region, Sibusiso Ndebele, in a July 2007 speech.

Inkosi Luthuli believed in the four pillars of struggle [:] peaceful resistance, international mobilisation, the political underground and the armed struggle.¹³

Kaunda's speech explicitly referenced God and/or Christianity eight times and non-violence five times so as to contextualise Luthuli. Violent oppression and violent resistance were only twice given brief and vague mention during the course of Kaunda's speech. In contrast, Mbeki's speech selectively referenced poets, historians and philosophers to contextualise the meaning of Luthuli's life citing political (as opposed to theological) motivations and violent (as opposed to militant non-violent) resistance to oppression. Mbeki's speech, entitled "The Tempo Quickens", encapsulated Luthuli's role in the liberation struggle within South Africa's oppression and violent response to that oppression. Before only once acknowledging Luthuli's Christian "prescriptions", Mbeki made eight references to violent oppression and four references to violent resistance to oppression. In interpreting Luthuli, Mbeki under-emphasised Luthuli's Christian motivations and elaborated on more philosophical and utilitarian principles to justify the ANC's move to violence. By de-emphasising Luthuli's Christian leanings, Mbeki sought to avoid the realisation that his views on the turn to violence, from 1968 to the present, contradict Luthuli's. Other ANC nationalists such as Jacob Zuma, Nelson Mandela and Ronnie Kasrils concur with Mbeki's 1968 sentiments when as a member of the ANC's Youth and Students' Section he said:

...we are forced to arms to defend ourselves. We cannot wish this on ourselves; we shall after all suffer most, die most and starve most. We take up arms not because we have less respect for life, but exactly

Joaquim Chissano, "Keynote Address by H. E. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, Former President of the Republic of Mozambique and Chairperson of the African Forum at the Albert John Luthuli Memorial Lecture", Durban, 27 October 2007, (Pretoria: Africa Forum, 2007), 2.

¹³ Sibusiso Ndebele, "SA: Inkosi Albert Luthuli Debate", Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Government, 19 July 2007, 2.

www.polity.org.za/article.php?a_id=113159, accessed 04 January 2008.

because we want to restore life to those that remain after the holocaust, and the children.¹⁴

Mbeki's speech typified nationalist interpretations of Luthuli that generally neglect the consequence of Christianity on his political prognostications.¹⁵ Kaunda's interpretation of Luthuli exemplified how adulations emphasise Luthuli's "Christian dignity", "impeccable moral character" and "[embodiment] of Christian virtues such as tolerance and forgiveness" in a very generic and superficial manner.¹⁶ Most characterisations of Luthuli fail to critically link Luthuli's faith to his political views. ANC nationalists negate Luthuli's faith to politics' benefit while ecclesiastics wallow in Luthuli's faith at the expense of its political ramifications. An accurate historical interpretation of Luthuli that includes an investigation of the manifestations and nuances of his faith tradition and directly links them to his specific political vantage contributes substantively to understanding the complex and contested political dynamics within South Africa's history.

Intention to Overthrow or Negotiate

This study also addresses two other approaches to historical production that are in contention. Thula Simpson's dissertation on the aims and objectives of *MK* disagreed with the well documented historical assumption that the armed struggle failed.¹⁷ Within the section entitled "Submit or Fight", Simpson's study, like many others, superficially narrated Luthuli's role in the decision to form *MK* and his stance on violence despite the fact that he led the movement upon which his study focused.¹⁸

¹⁴ Thabo Mbeki, "Letter to the Editor: Violence and Non-Violence", *Sechaba* 2, no. 5, May 1968, 12.

¹⁵ Aquino de Bragança and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., *The African Liberation Reader: The National Liberation Movements* (London: Zed, 1982), 2: 33-4.

No author, "Chief Albert John Mvumbi Luthuli, 1898-1967", *Sechaba* 1, no. 8, August 1967, supplemental insert.

¹⁶ Anthony Sampson, *The Treason Cage: The Opposition on Trial in South Africa* (Cape Town: William Heinemann, 1958), 186.

Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University, 1995), 208.

Ben Temkin, *Buthlezi: A Biography* (Balgowan: JB Publishers, 2003), 102. Buthelezi quoted.

¹⁷ Thula Simpson, "'Total Onslaught' Reconsidered: The ANC in the 1980s", (Ph.D. diss., Birkbeck College, University of London, London, 2007), 2.

¹⁸ Simpson mentioned Luthuli's name only three times when narrating how the movement opted for violence and to describe his position on that decision (49-50).

Saul Dubow's text was also similarly brief on Luthuli's involvement and thought on the decision to opt for violence. Yet, Dubow acknowledged that the decision conflicted with Luthuli's views expressed in "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross".

Saul Dubow, *The African National Congress* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2000), 67.

Furthermore, Simpson referenced almost exclusively Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* to document Luthuli's position on violence. Chapter three of this study elaborates on the dangers of utilising Mandela as the sole source of Luthuli's perspective on violence at this time. While not directly useful for an analysis of Luthuli, Simpson's study eruditely outlined the historiographic contributions that evaluated the efficacy of violence as a means to liberate South Africa. Simpson's review of historical literature highlighted many of the contestations around which this study of Luthuli revolves.

Simpson prefaced his revisionist argument by explaining that "two schools of thought have emerged on the reasons for the 'failure' of the armed struggle".¹⁹ The first school of thought, advocated most clearly by Howard Barrell, but also argued by Paul Moorcraft, Robert Fine and Dennis Davis, Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba, Dale McKinley, Vladimir Shubin, Saul Dubow, Martin Legassick, Kevin O'Brian and Simon Adams, understands that by opting for violent methods "the ANC placed its eggs in the wrong revolutionary basket" and therefore it failed to obtain its objectives because it attacked the Apartheid regime's strongest capability, that is military rather than political or moral strength.²⁰ Simpson summarised this perspective as follows:

¹⁹ Simpson, "'Total Onslaught' Reconsidered", 49-50.

²⁰ Simpson, "'Total Onslaught' Reconsidered", 2-3. See endnotes 4 and 5, 20-1. Simpson cited: Howard Barrell, *Conscripts to Their Age: African National Congress Operational Strategy, 1976-1986* (Ph.D. Politics, University of Oxford, 1993), 70-1, 97, 110, 119, 178-9 and 464 and "The ANC's Military Tradition", (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1994), 12; Paul Moorcraft, *African Nemesis: War and Revolution in Southern Africa (1945-2010)* (London: Brassey's, 1990), 345-6; Robert Fine and Dennis Davis, *Beyond Apartheid: Labour and Liberation in South Africa* (London: Pluto, 1991), 251-3; Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba (Oyama Mabandla), *Comrades Against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (London: James Currey, 1992), 200-1; Dale McKinley, *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle: A Critical Political Biography* (London: Pluto, 1997), 50 and 132; Vladimir Shubin, *ANC: A View from Moscow* (Bellville: Mayibuye, 1999), 51-2; Dubow, *The African National Congress*, 75-6; Martin Legassick, *Armed Struggle and Democracy: the Case of South Africa* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), 9 and "Armed Struggle in South Africa: Consequences of a Strategy Debate" in Henning Melber, ed., *Limits to Liberation in South Africa: The Unfinished Business of Democratic Consolidation* (Cape Town: HSRC, 2003), 156-9 and 161; Kevin O'Brien, "A Blunted Spear: The Failure of the African National Congress / South African Communist Party Revolutionary War Strategy 1961-1990" in *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 14, no. 2, Summer 2003, 27, 34 and 60; Simon Adams, *Comrade Minister: The South African Communist Party and the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy* (Huntington: Nova Science, 2001), 56. Elaine Reinertsen also argued that MK's goals, strategies and structures proved unrealistic and bound to fail. Elaine Reinertsen, "Umkhonto we Sizwe 1961-1964: The Break with a Long Lasting Tradition of Non-Violent Opposition in South Africa", Honours diss., University of Natal, 1985.

...the movement's narrow focus on rural guerrilla warfare led it to neglect the task of politically mobilising its popular constituency, thereby abandoning its most effective means of applying pressure on the state.²¹

Sheridan Johns articulated that this school of thought existed since the early 1970s. In the late 1970s, R. Johnston wrote that *MK* had no presence within the country when political resistance resumed in the 1970s and that by launching *MK*, Mandela "opted for the cathartic satisfaction of a *banzai* charge into the cannon[']s mouth".²²

The second school of thought Simpson discerned interpreted *MK*'s failure to be the result of the ANC's ideological reluctance to fully wage the armed struggle. This school of thought observed that...

...the ANC remained guided by the conservative traditions that it had imbibed since its formation in 1912. They believed that as a consequence, the movement was never truly committed to the policies of revolutionary violence that it proclaimed.²³

In other words, this second school of thought advocated by Stephen Davis, Edward Feit and Richard Gibson asserted that *MK* failed because the ANC did not ascribe to its own revolutionary propaganda and prosecuted the armed struggle in a half-hearted manner due to the ANC's and Luthuli's conservative legacy.²⁴

Simpson's dissertation challenged both schools of thought by arguing that the ANC's struggle for liberation through *MK* was *not* a failure. Rather, Simpson contended the armed movement succeeded because it achieved its primary objective of applying pressure on the Apartheid government to enter into dialogue for a

²¹ Simpson, "'Total Onslaught' Reconsidered", 2.

²² Simpson, "'Total Onslaught' Reconsidered", 4. See endnotes 7 and 8, 21. Simpson cited: R. Johnson, *How Long Will South Africa Survive?* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 23; Sheridan Johns, "Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare – A South African Case Study", *Journal of African Studies* 11, no. 2, 1973 in David and Helen Kimble eds., *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 11, no. 1, 2, 3 and 4, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1973, 279-80.

²³ Simpson, "'Total Onslaught' Reconsidered: The ANC in the 1980s", 5.

²⁴ Simpson, "'Total Onslaught' Reconsidered: The ANC in the 1980s", 5-6. See endnote 11, 21. Simpson cited:

Stephen Davis, *Apartheid's Rebels: Inside South Africa's Hidden War* (New Haven: Yale University, 1987), 75 and 203-4;

Edward Feit, *Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960-1964: A Case Study* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1971), 312-3;

Richard Gibson, *African Liberation Movements: Contemporary Struggles against White Minority Rule* (London: Oxford University, published for the Institute of Race Relations, 1972), 56-7.

negotiated settlement.²⁵ Simpson disagreed with the first school on two counts. First, Simpson disputed that the ANC failed and second, that the ANC did not have a realistic chance of success through low or high intensity guerrilla warfare. While disagreeing with the second school's conclusion that *MK* failed, Simpson agreed with its assertion that the ANC did not ideologically or strategically commit itself to revolutionary violence.

Simpson's claim that the ANC's low intensity war was a result of a strategic *choice* is incorrect as there was no realistic capability for anything else. When opting for armed methods, Mandela did not 'choose' sabotage.²⁶ As far as violent methods were concerned, but for a few quickly arrested second hand 'experts', *MK* could do nothing other than sabotage. Without knowledge of weaponry, arms and training within South Africa, the option to pursue low or high intensity guerrilla warfare did not exist. Even Mandela undertook only a few months of truncated training that did not prepare him to be a soldier, let alone a Commander-in-Chief. The ANC did not 'choose' to fight from Dar es Salaam and Lusaka; it could do no other as its cadres could not effectively penetrate the frontline states. The ANC did not 'choose' to exclusively use small arms; it had no finances for jets, helicopters, tanks and a standing army. While indebted to Simpson's historiographic analysis, this study concludes that the ANC failed to achieve its objectives for so many decades because it deviated from Luthuli's desire and advice that the ANC focus on domestic and international non-violent mass political action.

Methodology

In keeping with the expectations required of an original work, this study does not simply regurgitate what is already common biographical knowledge of Luthuli. The opening chapters focus on relevant biographical contributions from primary and secondary sources. These chapters use Luthuli's autobiography, already read by most interested in him, only as a template. These relevant biographical contributions

²⁵ This study suggests that international advocacy organisations (primarily Christian in ethos) lobbying for economic sanctions, domestic trade unions and the United Democratic Front using non-violent mass action pressured the Apartheid regime to enter into a negotiated settlement in spite of the arguably counterproductive efforts of the armed movement.

²⁶ However, one could rightly state that Mandela chose sabotage over 'terrorism', i.e., random acts of violence against 'innocents'.

primarily focus on events that pertain to Luthuli's particular Christian faith tradition and its predisposing affect on his political decisions, especially the decision whether to sanction the use of violence. While there are other aspects of Luthuli's life that prove valuable for interpretation and analysis and thus may interest scholars of varying disciplines, this study is limited to a biographical focus on times, places, personalities, institutions and roles that are pertinent to the thesis that Luthuli did not support the ANC's decision to utilise violence due to his Christian and unique Congregationalist background, thus rendering Luthuli politically obsolete as the President-General of the ANC from 1962 until his death in 1967.

The pace of the introduction's chronological narrative is very rapid, conveying a brief history of Congregationalism. Herein, broad tenets (dissent, autonomy, democracy, justice and education) of the Congregationalist faith tradition are highlighted. How those tenets relate to an ecclesiastic position (or lack thereof) on violence within the Apartheid context is also illuminated. Profiles of prominent Congregationalists in southern Africa (van der Kemp, Philip, Livingstone and Mackenzie), two of whom Luthuli specifically acknowledged were worthy of emulation in his Nobel Peace Prize speech, relate to what degree their actions demonstrated the imbrication of politics and faith in their lives. Chapter one explores the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions' (American Board) mission in Kwazulu, Natal and Groutville. Luthuli's *Amakholwa* (Believers) ancestry and the many Christian personalities that indirectly and directly influenced his life are profiled to highlight his ecclesio-political genealogy. Chapter two also reviews Luthuli's political 'adolescence' by focusing upon the institutions within which Luthuli participated. This chapter emphasises major milestones of Luthuli's political life such as his election to and dismissal from the Groutville chieftaincy (1935 and 1952), his election as leader of the Natal and national ANC (1951 and 1952), the Defiance Campaign (1953), the Congress of the People (1955), the Treason Trial (1957) and the formation of the Pan-Africanist Congress (1959).

In chapter three, the study retreats from the chronological ecclesiastic and biographical narratives to delineate the production of an historical account that understands Luthuli accepted and subsequently supported the turn to violence. Chapter three examines South African nationalists' interpretation of history that has asserted since 1967 that Luthuli supported violence, as opposed to more formal

scholarship that accepts that he did not. Emphasis is laid on the ANC's depiction of Luthuli, using silences, suggestions and misrepresentations, as the ANC leader who supported the ignition of violence.

In chapters four and five, the study returns to the biographical and chronological narrative. The pace of these chapters drastically slows in comparison to chapters one and two. Chapter four chronicles only 1960 and focuses on events that led the ANC to consider and opt for violent methods of resistance. This chapter highlights Sharpeville, the State of Emergency, the burning of Luthuli's pass and the banning of the ANC (March-April 1960). Chapter five covers 1961 and investigates Luthuli's stance on the decision to use violence as a means to prosecute the liberation struggle. Events central to this chapter are the All-In Conference (March 1961) and strike (May 1961), the Congresses' decision to launch *MK* (July 1961), the announcement of Luthuli's being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (October 1961), his receipt of the Prize (December 1961) and the launch of *MK* (December 1961).

Finally, chapter six resumes the biographical and chronological narrative at a rapid pace. Chapter six covers the period 1962 to 1967 and engages Luthuli's soon to be aborted published efforts to indefinitely forestall the feared imminent use of violence (March and April 1962), his dislocation from the reins of ANC power due to his poor health and bannings (his and the ANC's), his joint appeal with Martin Luther King, Jr. (December 1962), his statement on the Rivonia Trial sentences (June 1964), United States Senator Robert Kennedy's visit (June 1966) and the tragic events that led to Luthuli's death (July 1967). As with chapters one and two, the events focused upon in chapter six relate directly and indirectly to the stance Luthuli took on the ANC's use of violence. The entire study's conclusion utilises the insights of John and Jean Comaroff to provide a concluding analysis explicating the impact of Congregationalism on Luthuli's theological, philosophical and political views.

At least seven theses contained within this study justify the claim that Luthuli never supported the use of violence as a means to obtain liberation. One, the actual historical and archival record show no evidence of this, and in fact, other than two possible sentences taken out of context, is there any argument to be made that Luthuli supported the utilisation of violence. Luthuli adhered to a non-violent position long after 16 December 1961. He refused to support violence though he was respectful and sympathetic of those who were driven to that extreme. In short, *all* of Luthuli's

texts indicate an unwavering support for non-violent methods. Two, Luthuli's understanding of Christianity, shaped through his connections with the American Board and its Congregationalist tradition, led him to understand the struggle to be one towards 'civilisation' and that the means needed to justify the ends. Three, Luthuli's links to the white community - through churches, the legal fraternity, the Liberal Party and the Black Sash, along with international supporters - meant that he could not condone killing in the name of freedom. Four, Luthuli's isolation during the Treason Trial and then due to his bannings meant that by the mid-1950s he was no longer actively shaping the direction of the ANC and it made many decisions to which he was not party. Five, Luthuli's understanding of the military and police power of the Apartheid state, the ill-prepared black nationalist 'army' and the moral power of non-violence within the global setting - particularly the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize - made him see the armed struggle as suicidal and a poor political strategy. Six, his death was not likely to be the result of an assassination, and therefore no argument can be implied that he was killed because of his support of the armed struggle. Seven, the ANC *first* claimed that Luthuli supported the armed struggle only immediately after his death when he could not refute such a position.

The perspectives of Jean and John Comaroffs found in their text *Of Revelation and Revolution* are undercurrents in this study's assessment of the impact Christianity, and more specifically, Congregationalism, on Luthuli's theological, philosophical and political outlook. The Comaroffs examined "the nature of power and resistance" by investigating the symbiotic relationship between the Nonconformist evangelists who were carriers of the colonialist's consciousness and the southern Tswana whose consciousnesses became to a certain degree colonised (1820-1920).²⁷ As a preface to their investigation, the Comaroffs offered critiques of various schools of historical thought that also sought to articulate "the long battle for the possession of salient signs and symbols".²⁸ The Comaroffs, as historical anthropologists, were critical of

²⁷ Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991, 1: 6.

The Comaroffs are heavily influenced by Gramsci's (1971) vague and amorphous understanding of hegemony (or "ideology" in its "highest sense"). Many other historians' relevant work can also be brought into dialogue with my project: Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (1976), van Onselen's *The Seed Is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, A South African Sharecropper (1894-1985)* (1995), and Genovese's *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (1976). I limit documenting my influence to the Comaroffs for the most practical reason that *Revelation and Revolution*'s subject matter relates directly to missiology and southern Africa.

²⁸ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 4.

the simplistic “missionary imperialist” thesis that argued that colonisers and their missiological handmaidens (both presented as homogenous caricatures), exclusively through forceful actions and/or processes of political economy, imposed their worldviews on the subaltern who lacked agency and hence were simply dominated. The Comaroffs perceived a more stealthy, but perhaps more potent, moral economy wherein the materialist paradigms and goods “presupposed the messages and meanings they proclaimed in the pulpit, and vice versa” to answer: “How is it that [the missionaries], like other colonial functionaries, wrought far-reaching political, social and economic transformations in the absence of concrete resources of much consequence?”²⁹

In their study of the encounter between Nonconformists and southern Tswana in the nineteenth century, the Comaroffs expressed their grave concerns with deconstructionalist thought wherein artefacts, archives and texts were perceived as inherently prejudiced, contrived and/or mutually contradictory and completely meaningless. While the deconstructualists’ scepticism about the existence of truth can be helpful, the Comaroffs recognised that hegemonies of minorities (evangelists) to exist over long periods of time, and more importantly, can be imposed without the use of violence. The Comaroffs sought to exhibit the reciprocity engendered by the intersection of societies and cultures wherein social meaning does “indeed become unfixed, resisted and reconstructed” for both partners.³⁰ The transfer of socio-cultural paradigms was not one-way and thus explains the agency of the subaltern as it accepts, resists or amalgamates the ‘alien’ paradigms within its own. Likewise, the Comaroffs did not recognise the missionaries as monolithic and they sought to explain how they fused indigenous society within their own thinking. Also not dismissed was the reality that missionaries and their political compatriots wielded a disproportionate quantity of “agentive” and “nonagentive” ‘power’ thus enabling them to produce and reproduce the bases of the Tswana’s existence; likewise, such a reality is not ignored when examining the influence of Congregationalism on Luthuli.³¹

In his study entitled “From Church History to Religious History”, Philippe Denis explored South African religious historiography. Therein, Denis related that “church history is an isolated discipline, almost completely cut off from the social

²⁹ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 9.

³⁰ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 18.

³¹ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 22.

sciences and from secular history in particular” despite the fact that South Africa is unique in the high degree to which Christianity influenced its culture and history.³² However, Norman Etherington indicated that secular historians are increasingly interested in religion.³³ In writing a biographical study on Luthuli through an ecclesiastic lens, this study provides an understanding of and conclusions about Luthuli that differ from political writings on him that will intrigue both secular and religious historians. In doing so, this study accomplishes what Richard Elphick requested: “[to write] religion into history”.³⁴

Historical interpretations of Luthuli often cite his Christian credentials in a very generic and superficial manner. This investigation is more strategic and thus specific. Interpreters such as Mary Benson and Nadine Gordimer, whose works acknowledged Christianity’s profound influence on Luthuli’s life, contribute to this study.³⁵ Yet, because they, like most authors, do not comment on the particular brand of faith (Congregationalism) Luthuli professed and in what manner it directly influenced his specific political outlook and strategy, further interpretation is herein needed. One author tersely stated, but did not elaborate upon, a thesis of this study:

The Congregationalist training gave Mr. Luthuli lifelong religious convictions, a respect for Western civilisation and a sturdy belief in the inherent equality of all men.³⁶

Paul Rich, in his chapter “Albert Luthuli & the American Board Mission in South Africa”, provided the only substantive and specific ecclesiastic examination of Luthuli. For example, Rich stated that Luthuli served on a committee appointed to draw up a constitution for the Bantu Congregational Church and as a consequence...

³² Philippe Denis, “From Church History to Religious History: Strengths and Weaknesses of South African Religious Historiography”, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 99, November 1997, 85 and 84, respectively. Denis did not quote, but cited:

Nicholas Southey, “History, Church History and Historical Theology in South Africa”, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 68, September 1989, 5-16.

³³ Norman Etherington, “Recent Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in Southern Africa”, in *Missions and Christianity in South African History*, eds. Henry Bredekamp and Robert Ross (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand, 1995), 203.

³⁴ Richard Elphick, “Writing Religion into History: The Case of South African Christianity”, in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 11-26.

³⁵ Mary Benson, *Chief Albert Lutuli of South Africa* (London: Oxford University, 1963), 59-67. Nadine Gordimer, *The Essential Gesture: Writings, Politics and Places*, ed. Stephen Clingman (Johannesburg: Taurus, 1988), 31-41. Also found in:

Nadine Gordimer, “Chief Luthuli”, *Atlantic Monthly* 203, no. 4, April 1959, 34-9.

³⁶ Alden Whitman, *The Obituary Book* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), 122.

Congregationalism provided [Luthuli] with a working model of a democratically-run Christian community which could be extended to provide a programme for South Africa as a whole.³⁷

Willem Saayman, who in his text *A Man with a Shadow* provided “a missiological interpretation in context” of Zachariah Matthews (also known as Z. K. Matthews), demonstrated the methodological example for this study.³⁸ In his biography of Matthews, Saayman provided two different perspectives to his life:

...a contextual situation or ‘placing’ of Z. K. Matthews, and a missiological interpretation of his story...I propose the term ‘social mission history’ for what I am attempting. To put it in yet a different way, I hope to discover the missiological dimensions in a contextual reconstruction of Z. K. Matthews’ (hi)story. Such a reconstruction must take seriously the formative places, influences and people in his life story, must take fully into account the role of the political economies of his day...³⁹

Lyn Graybill, who linked theology and rudimentary ecclesiology to currents in Luthuli’s political thought, is perhaps the one author whose project most closely resembles my own on a practical level.⁴⁰ Graybill correctly understood that academics give insufficient attention to the impact of religion on political development. A biography on Luthuli that highlights his unique spiritual perspectives reveals much about the political choices Luthuli made. Graybill’s study examined four individuals (Robert Sobukwe, Steve Biko, Albert Luthuli and Desmond Tutu) and explored how each leader’s Christian beliefs shaped the respective liberation movements they led. Many interpretations of Luthuli provide generic references to Luthuli’s Christian faith. However, the generic label of ‘Christian’ is insufficient to interpret Luthuli and his views. Graybill stated:

³⁷ Paul Rich, “Albert Luthuli & the American Board Mission in South Africa”, in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 202.

Rich published the above also as a paper for the “Conference on People, Power & Culture: The History of Christianity in South Africa, 1792-1992” at the University of Western Cape (UWC) Great Hall and Genadendal Mission Museum, from 12-15 August 1992 by the UWC Institute for Historical Research, 28-9. Found at the St. Joseph’s Theological Institute, Hilton, Kwazulu-Natal.

“Congregationalism provided a working model of a democratically-run community which inspired Luthuli’s belief in a democratic programme for South Africa”.

³⁸ Willem Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow: The Life and Times of Professor Z. K. Matthews, A Missiological Interpretation in Context* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1996).

³⁹ Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, xvii.

⁴⁰ Graybill, *Religion and Resistance Politics in South Africa* (Westport: Praeger, 1995), 25-44.

Christianity, then, was never a static dogma but was continually reinterpreted in the light of new exigencies. Thus, the Christianity espoused by Albert Luthuli was quite different from that articulated by Steve Biko – and led to different strategies.⁴¹

No intention is made in this study to aggrandise the role of or serve as an apology for Christian evangelisation, specifically by the American Board in Natal and Zululand. Rather, the intention is to provide an accurate understanding of the influence of Congregational Christianity upon Luthuli to allow for a more accurate description of events related to and motivations for his stance on violence. If the elements of the American Board are described affirmatively, it is because Luthuli described them affectionately. Likewise, if elements of the American Board are described negatively, it is because Luthuli described them critically. Also, any reader expecting this study to provide a personal and subjective *moral* judgement on the ANC's or Luthuli's stance on violence will be disappointed. While this study examines and provides conclusions regarding the ethical considerations and the *strategic* ramifications of the option to use violence, it will refrain from evaluating whether Luthuli or Mandela was morally 'right' or 'wrong'.

This study utilises interviews actually held with Luthuli or publications that he penned, such as columns he wrote for the *Golden City Post*, to a much greater extent than recollections gained through interviews forty-five plus years following his death. For example, excerpts of interviews found in Mary Benson's biographical works, published by *Drum* magazine and held with newspaper journalists such as Benjamin Pogrund, Michael Lloyd and Daniel McGeachie *at the time* decisions were being made by Luthuli are utilised extensively. However, that is not say this study does not cite recollective interviews from academics such as Bernard Magubane and allies of Luthuli such as Narainsamy Naicker and Rusty Bernstein. For example, many interviews with liberation icons such as Mandela, Turok, Mbeki, Nair, Ndebele, Asmal, Zuma and even members of Luthuli's family (Edgar and Hilda Thandeka Luthuli) found in archives and audio-visual documentaries are cited in this study. Findings based on interviews, for example between Charlotte Owen and Peter Corbett and Advocate Andrew Wilson (who represented the Luthuli's family during the

⁴¹ Graybill, *Religion and Resistance Politics*, 3.

inquest into his death) are also included. Friends of the family (such as Goolam Suleman and Donald Sivetye), ‘veteran’ Congregationalist clergy and missionaries (such as B. K. Dlodla, Duncan Davidson, Howard Christofersen, Howard Trumbull, and Edward Hawley), children (such as Albertinah and Christian Luthuli) and lesser known allies of the struggle (such as Tor Sellström, Jean Hill and the painter of the “Black Christ”, Ronald Harrison) were interviewed by me during the research phase of this study and their perspectives are found herein. Having access to office space and resources at the Luthuli Museum in Groutville on a weekly basis for four years provided me with the opportunity to dialogue and interview many speakers and visitors whose insights lace this study. In general, it can be fairly concluded that retrospective interviews, whether conducted by me or found in recent audio-visual documentaries, prove less than helpful. Recollections or conclusions about Luthuli, for example from Billy Nair and Jacob Zuma and Bernard Magubane, proved to be inaccurate at best. Congregational clergy interviewed failed to provide much substantive information regarding Luthuli’s activities or thoughts. My interviews with Luthuli’s children revealed that for the most part he protected his family from the increased risk of arrest and interrogation by not disclosing to them his politically sensitive thoughts or actions. Therefore with few exceptions, i.e., concerning Luthuli’s health, interviews with family members provided few if any verifiable revelations.

Perhaps most importantly, this study is not a hagiography. As the title “Bound by Faith” suggests, Luthuli’s non-support of armed struggle is neither celebrated nor condemned by this study. To ‘be bound’ conjures both positive and negative connotations. As it concerns the issue of violence, Luthuli’s binding proved to be *both* positive and negative. Luthuli’s character and ideology, primarily motivated by his religious faith, expanded his abilities and popularity thus catapulting him to the heights of public opinion and leadership within a context when a majority conceived only of using non-violent methods. When that context changed and a majority perceived violence to be more efficacious, Luthuli’s character and ideology, primarily motivated by his religious faith, restricted his political horizons and severely stunted his ability to successfully influence and lead the liberation movement.

Introduction

Absorbing the Christian Ethos of Home, Congregation and Community¹

Any discussion of Congregational polity must begin with the reminder that for Congregationalism polity is not a mere matter of organisation or form. If a church is local or territorial, comprising all the people who live round the building in which it worships, then the relation of such people to each other, to the church's officers and to the state, may simply be a matter of arrangement and form; but such is not the case with a church whose principle of constitution is specifically religious. When a church is formed solely of those who love One Lord and Master, and desire to serve Him, its polity is fundamentally spiritual. For Congregationalists, matters of order - laws, canons, injunctions, articles, creeds, advertisements - are powerless to make a church; only Christian men and women can do that, and they are kings and priests...²

--The Report of the British Commission to the Fourth International Congregational Council, Boston, United States, 1920. The Commission's task: "To review the history of Congregational Polity, to appraise its present features and to make a forecast of the developments yet to come".

Congregationalism

This introduction presents the extent that Christianity and Congregational missiology, polity and education inspired Chief Albert Luthuli's fundamental guiding principles.³ In subsequent chapters, this study demonstrates how those principles engendered within Luthuli an existential theological and strategic angst regarding his position on armed resistance. Though periodically alluding to the issue of violence so as to anticipate arguments made in subsequent chapters, this introduction does not specifically focus upon it. Rather, the following introductory background substantively links Luthuli to his particular brand of faith: Congregationalism.

¹ Albert Luthuli, *Let My People Go* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2006), 11.

"All the time, unconsciously, I was busy absorbing the Christian ethos of home, and church congregation and the social ethos of the community".

² Albert Peel, *Inevitable Congregationalism* (London: Independent, 1937), 32.

³ I understand why contestation exists between the use of the terms "Chief" (colonial English) and "Inkosi" (indigenous *Isizulu*). I use the term "Chief" because this is the preferred designation his Groutville community gave and still gives to him. I capitalise 'Chief' when used as a title and do not capitalise it when used as a common noun.

Particular personalities had an indirect, semi-direct or direct influence on Luthuli's religio-political ideology. By providing brief biographies of, for example, Pixley Isaka ka Seme, this study recognises Luthuli's indirect influences. By highlighting, for example John Dube, this study identifies Luthuli's semi-direct influences. Chapters one and six examine in detail previously underestimated direct influences, such as John Reuling and George Houser, respectively. Together, all three degrees of influence offer sufficient and comprehensive evidence linking Congregationalism to Luthuli's life. Because 'associations', however close, be they events, personas or institutions, in and of themselves, provide an insufficient basis upon which to discern Luthuli's religious and political vantage, the exploration of 'associations' only compliments chapter four that more closely links Luthuli with allies opposed to the initiation of violence. Luthuli's theological perspectives on violence and his willingness to yield to, but unwillingness to support, its use primarily derive from principles engendered by his Christian and Congregational upbringing and close associations.

Luthuli stood as the quintessential product of mission education provided by the American Board. Gordimer testified that Luthuli's American Board background seeped even into the manner in which he spoke English: "with a distinct American intonation, acquired along with his education at schools run by American missionaries".⁴ No less than his speech, Luthuli's politics were profoundly influenced by his Congregational ecclesiology transplanted from the United States. The American Board that reared, educated, mentored, employed and preached to Luthuli throughout his formative years instilled in him a reverence for the values espoused, though not always implemented, by the western world.

An understanding of Congregationalism's emphasis on religious, political and individual liberty reveals a source of Luthuli's lifelong motivation to free South Africa's Black majority from the yoke of white supremacy. Democracy is the cornerstone of Congregational polity. Hence, an understanding of Congregationalism's democratic ethos and its influence on Luthuli explains why he yielded to a Joint Congresses' majority decision to form *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK or 'Spear of the Nation'), though he led as President-General the liberation movement

⁴ Gordimer, *The Essential Gesture*, 32.

Sampson also commented on how Luthuli's speech inflections revealed "a deep American burr". Sampson, *The Treason Cage*, 186.

and disagreed with the decision. Congregationalism values freedom of conscience, thought and speech and hence provides an interpretive lens through which to understand how Luthuli tolerated and even welcomed Communists to participate as partners in the ANC's struggle for freedom in spite of his own disavowal of Communism and pressure from his liberal allies to exclude them. Congregationalism's concern for education created within Luthuli a lifelong yearning for knowledge, a passion for teaching, a strong will to ensure his own children succeeded academically and a will to fund educational scholarships through the Luthuli Foundation. Congregationalism's emphases on local property ownership, strong work ethic and upward socio-economic mobility, what Luthuli called the Christian principle of "work *and* pray", illuminate his negative conception of traditional tribal leadership that thwarted an emerging African contribution to world civilisation (Luthuli's emphasis).⁵ Luthuli considered 'civilisation' to be a desired composite product of scientific, political, cultural and moral (religious) progress. Congregationalism planted its foci on justice, human equality and ecumenism within Luthuli enabling him to be a militant advocate for human rights in cooperation with a broad umbrella of racial and ideological groups.

After briefly outlining Congregational history, Steve de Gruchy summarised its key "impulses": a strong commitment against state interference in the church, a democratic church order that locates property ownership and decision-making in the hands of the 'gathered congregation' at local level, a commitment to unity and ecumenism; a valuing of human dignity, justice and freedom as key elements in its praxis in the world and a desire to share its message abroad.⁶ Of course, many of these principles were ignored or contradicted at various times during the Congregational church's history. For example, ironically the Puritans established in the 'New World' a theocracy, contrary to their ethos, and thus provided an example of how throughout human history ideals are sought and imperfectly realised.⁷ Nevertheless, 'non-Conformist' values endured as they perpetually resurfaced in some of its remarkable adherents such as Luthuli.

⁵ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 185.

⁶ Steve de Gruchy, G. Philpott and D. Ntseng, "The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa: An Inventory of its Landholdings" (Pietermaritzburg: Church Land Programme, n.d.), 5.

⁷ Ian Booth, "Major Epochs in the History of Congregationalism", in *Papers Presented at the UCCSA Congregational Polity and Ecclesiology Consultation*, Carmel Christian Conference Centre, George, 21-23 August 2008, 3.

It is no historical coincidence that John Dube, Pixley Isaka ka Seme, W. B. Rubusana and Luthuli all led the ANC movement for a democratic South Africa as its first President-General, founder, first Vice-President and longest serving President-General, respectively.⁸ All four were born and bred within Congregationalism, arguably the most democratic form of 'mainline' ecclesiastic polity. Dube, Seme and Luthuli experienced an intensive exposure to the very imperfectly applied democratic and egalitarian ethos of Congregationalism domestically in South Africa and abroad in the United States. Luthuli travelled to the United States in 1948 as a visiting lecturer sponsored in part by the American Board. Luthuli's wife, Nokukhanya Bhengu, studied at Inanda Seminary, also an American Board founded institution. Luthuli, having been educated at the Aldinville primary school in Groutville and having learned and taught at Adams College in Amanzimtoti, both American Congregationalist institutions, no doubt had a thorough understanding of American history and its relationship with Congregationalism.

Congregationalism's roots begin in the Hebrew scriptures, the Christian testament, the early church as related by the Acts of the Apostles, the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformation, the Church of England and early Congregationalism established in the British Isles and North America by the early Puritans and the Mayflower's Pilgrims, respectively. In short, Congregationalism is the end result of increasing degrees of democratisation during the history of the Christian church. Congregationalism was born from and grew out of a desire to free the church from authoritative and hierarchical systems of ecclesiastical polity. Congregationalism emphasises and holds as supreme the "congregation" in matters related to church governance.

Dissent

Three origins of Congregationalism emanated from three strands of the Reformation, each contributing to its foundational ideology.⁹ The first strand sprung from the English reformer John Wyclif who held as Congregationalism's core pillar

⁸ The American Board reared Dube, Seme and Luthuli while the London Missionary Society reared Rubusana.

⁹ Peter de Villiers, "The Formation and Ethos of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa 1967-1992", (Master of Arts diss., Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town, 1998), 2.

“that there is such a thing as private judgment in doctrinal matters”.¹⁰ Wyclif’s motto related to spiritual dissent. Yet, during the Reformation as well as during Apartheid, a fine line existed between spiritual and political dissent. Often, as with Luthuli, the two became synonymous. One book Luthuli prized in his bookshelf, *History of American Congregationalism*, attested:

...the Congregational way possessed a power and principle which will always be asserted and realised in a free society. They [articulate] the nature of such a society, whether in church or state.¹¹

To describe the Congregationalist faith fully, two words are emphasised. The first word, ‘Fellowship’, qualifies Congregationalism as a voluntary association of Christians. The second word, ‘Free’, qualifies Congregationalism as cherished, for it itemises as its inheritance to the well-being of all “the free state, the free school, the free society life of our Country”.¹² Luthuli exuded Congregationalism’s dissenting ethos when he considered issuing a statement to the judge justifying the burning of his passbook following being found guilty and before being sentenced:

There comes a time, sir, when a leader must give as practical a demonstration of his convictions and willingness to live up to the demands of the cause, as he expects of his people...I am not sorry nor ashamed of what I did. I could not have done less than I did and still live with my conscience”.¹³

Congregationalism upholds the right to dissent. One Congregational document affirmed:

¹⁰ de Villiers, “The Formation and Ethos of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa”, 2. de Villiers’ cited:

P. T. Forsyth, *Faith, Freedom and the Future* (London: Independent, 1955), 13.

¹¹ Gaius Atkins and Frederick Fagley, *History of American Congregationalism* (Boston: The Pilgrim, 1942), 389-90.

Oliver Cowles, likely related to the famous missionary Bridgman-Cowles family who ministered the American Board for an accumulated two hundred and seventy-nine years, gave the book to Luthuli as a gift in December 1948 inscribing on its cover page, “To my good and generous friend, Albert J. Luthuli”.

¹² Atkins and Fagley, *History of American Congregationalism*, 390. Atkins and Fagley cited: *Year Book of the Congregational Christian Churches for 1940*.

¹³ Albert Luthuli, *Let My People Go: The Autobiography of a Great African Leader* (Johannesburg: Collins, 1962), appendix C, “Luthuli’s Undelivered Statement at the Time of His Trial for Burning His Pass”, 247.

Congregationalism was born in dissent; our fathers in the Faith refused to accept the authority of the state as expressing the mind of Christ for them. Congregationalists joined the company of others who in obedience to the Word of God refused to obey the dictates of men.¹⁴

Congregationalism also holds as a fundamental or classical tenet the objection to the use of creeds in worship or as tests of membership. This tenet affirms that contexts change as do theological perspectives. Creeds are not final – but they bear witness to specific historical contexts. To the same extent that creeds elucidate and explain concepts, creeds can limit and stifle understanding. Creeds also exclude. Rather than include in fellowship others with whom one agrees on fundamentals, creeds have the tendency to bar others on the basis of trivialities and nuances. Regarding creeds, one book on Congregational polity read:

...we do not grant them definitive authority. For us they are witnesses to the faith of the Church, formulated for their time, just as we believe that the faith once delivered has to be interpreted and stated afresh in the context of each era.¹⁵

Unlike his liberal and Africanist critics on the left and right, respectively, that vehemently opposed any Communist influence in the ANC, Luthuli refused to ostracise anyone with differing ideologies so long as they had as their primary goal the overthrow of white supremacy. Despite strong convictions, Christian and otherwise, Luthuli refused to have dogmatic views to which allies of, and within, the ANC must adhere. Luthuli's ecumenical leanings maintained a 'broad church', uniting in solidarity Indians, Whites, Blacks, Communists, liberals, Christians, Muslims, modernists and traditionalists with the ANC thus enabling the survival and future growth of the anti-Apartheid struggle and the creation of the present day democratic South Africa.¹⁶ In a correspondence to Mary-Louise Hooper during the

¹⁴ Joseph Wing, ed., *Jesus Is Lord in Church and World: Studies in the Nature of Congregationalism* (Johannesburg: United Congregational Church of Southern Africa), 1980, 8.

¹⁵ D. Roy Briggs, "A Covenant Church: Studies in the Polity of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa in Terms of its Covenant" (Gaborone: Pula, 1996), 52-3.

¹⁶ Race is a human construct that has no genetic definiteness. Neither is there grammatical definiteness on how race should be textually communicated. I found that the terms 'White' and 'Black' are capitalised or not capitalised indiscriminately in original textual quotations. In this study, I capitalise all proper nouns when identifying a racial category, e.g. 'a Black'/'Blacks', 'a White'/'Whites' and a 'Coloured'/'Coloureds'. Possibly against conventional practice, when a racial category precedes a noun and thus is also used grammatically as an adjective, I do not capitalise any word for the sake of consistency, e.g., 'white supremacy' and 'the white press'; 'a black majority' and 'a black man'; 'coloured church' and 'coloured races'. However, even if preceding a noun, I capitalise 'Indian',

Treason Trial, Luthuli affirmed his objection to political 'creeds' that would exclude others:

I personally would say it would not only be unwise but mean to forgo the service of any of our faithful and tried lawyers solely on the grounds of leftist leanings of anyone we abandon. We would be pandering unreasonably to unbridled prejudice; to me only professional ability and sympathy with the Cause should be our CRITERION (Luthuli's emphasis).¹⁷

Autonomous and Democratic

The second strand of the Reformation that contributed to Congregational thought is found within the Anabaptist movement, the most radical strain of the Reformation. The Anabaptists upheld the congregation as self-governing or independent of state or episcopal oversight and hence Congregationalism is often described as the application of democratic principles in Church government. One Congregational scholar, A. M. Fairbairn, described one of the determinative elements of the Congregational church as follows:

It is autonomous and authoritative, possessed of the freedom necessary to the fulfilment of its mission and the realisation of its ideals, endowed with all the legislative and administrative powers needed for the maintenance of order and the attainment of progress.¹⁸

Again, Ian Booth rightly pointed out that often the defenders and propagators of Congregationalism often did not 'practice what they preached'. For example, though Oliver Cromwell instituted religious freedom after the English Civil War and the execution of Charles I in 1649, the Congregational Church became in effect the 'Establishment Church' whereby ministers accepted government grants, salary

'European' and 'African' as they are adjectives that refer to a country or continents, respectively. I intend no offence through this uniformity.

¹⁷ University of Cape Town (UCT), Manuscripts and Archives Department (MAD), Legal Collections (LC): Albert John Luthuli Papers (AJLP), BCZA 78/46-47, Cooperative Africana Microfilm Project of the Center for Research Libraries (CAMP) 2914, Reel #1, correspondence from Luthuli to Mary-Louise Hooper, 02 July 1956, 2.

The Albert John Luthuli Papers can also be found at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria. For consistency's sake, I cite only the University of Cape Town references for the remainder of this investigation.

¹⁸ W. B. Selbie, *Congregationalism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1927), 13. Selbie cited: Congregational Union Jubilee Lectures, 51-2.

subsidies and privileged appointments from the state.¹⁹ After the restoration of Charles II, Congregationalism again went underground and became non-Conformist and Independent in nature again. Congregational independence required self-governance; and self-governance accentuated the value placed the principle of democracy that so imbedded itself within Luthuli. Throughout his writings Luthuli lamented:

White rule having thus made a vicious circle around us denies effectively and completely democratic rights we could use to promote our progress and development.²⁰

Luthuli also lamented:

The white leadership in the two major parties shirks its task of progressively educating white public opinion along democratic lines.²¹

Biblical Concern for Justice

The third and final strand of the Reformation that contributed to Congregational thought derives from John Calvin and hence enables Congregationalism to be included within the Reformed or Calvinist tradition. Calvin emphasised the importance of the Scriptures (as opposed to church tradition) as the primary, if not only, means by which to discern God's will. This emphasis on the Bible, released from the scholastic Latin and written in the English vernacular, democratised biblical exegesis and hermeneutics thus empowering the individual to meditate and interpret. Luthuli ubiquitously based his political views on scriptural references. As this study demonstrates, Luthuli drafted his most famous statement, "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross" from a sermon he preached a week earlier at Adams College. The title of Luthuli's autobiography, *Let My People Go*, is biblically sourced. Luthuli routinely quoted the Bible in major political speeches, even to predominantly Indian audiences, many of whom practiced Islam or Hinduism. In quoting scripture, Luthuli never aimed to evangelise his listeners. Rather, Luthuli

¹⁹ Booth, "Major Epochs in the History of Congregationalism", 4-5.

²⁰ Bailey's African Photo Archives (BAPA), Luthuli File (LF), *Golden City Post*, "Our Political Weapon", by Albert Luthuli, 23 August 1959.

²¹ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "U. P. No Better than Nats.", by Albert Luthuli, 30 August 1959, 15.

spoke genuinely from what motivated him, Christian scripture, and used it to make political rather than theological, or eschatological, points. For example, in his opening address to the 22nd Biennial Conference of the South African Indian Congress in October 1956, Luthuli preached:

Rather lose all than lose our souls and honour and so save ourselves the shame of earning the disdain of our contemporaries and the condemnation of posterity but worse suffer eternal damnation for indeed what will it profit to gain the whole world but to lose his own soul? This Divine poser should be pondered upon deeply by any of us who might be tempted by considerations of expediency and false personal gain or intimidation by fear to flirt with the wicked maid, Apartheid.²²

Closely related to Congregationalism's biblical adherence is its emphasis on justice. Throughout the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, 'justice' is arguably more prominent than 'love' as a biblical tenet. In a Gospel text, Jesus quoted Hebrew prophecy (Isaiah 61:1-2) to announce his mission: "He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...to release the oppressed..." (Luke 4:18). Hence, Luthuli's particular brand of faith historically emphasised a concern for social justice. In 1999, on the two hundredth anniversary of the Congregational tradition in southern Africa, Thabo Mbeki acknowledged this unique characteristic of Congregational faith.

[London Missionary Society missionaries] provide testimony of the struggle to establish Christian values in a world in which these values were in constant danger of being compromised through colonial plunder and oppression...Under these adverse conditions, those members of the London Missionary Society of two centuries ago and their successors have been regarded as unique, in that they defended the rights of Africans and established educational institutions in what was then called the Cape Colony. In this way they contributed to the ongoing resistance to colonialism...We can expect nothing less from the church of Theodorus van der Kemp, of John Philip, of Albert Luthuli than that you, the United Congregational Church [of Southern Africa], will, as you have done for two hundred years, continue to hold

²² University of South Africa (UNISA), UNISA Library (UL), UNISA Archives (UA), Documentation Centre for African Studies (DCAS), South African Indian Congress (SAIC), 105, 6.1.11, Opening Address by Albert Luthuli to the 22nd Biennial Congress of the South African Indian Congress Meeting, "A Spirit the Refuses to Submit to Tyranny", Gandhi Hall, Johannesburg, 19-21 October 1956, 4. Luthuli quoted Matthew 16:26.

high the star of hope as we struggle to move out of the years of despair.²³

The American Congregational church also possessed the same pedigree of social justice concern. Congregationalists arguably led the anti-slavery movement in the United States as early as 1790 with the founding of the Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society, the American Anti-Slavery Society and the American Missionary Association. Abraham Lincoln read a book against slavery written by Leonard Bacon, the founder of the American Anti-Slave Society, and said that it gave him his foundational ideas concerning the iniquity of human slavery.²⁴ Luthuli read the perspectives of well-known American Congregationalist Henry Beecher who wrote: "The object of Christianity is human welfare; its method is character-building, its process is evolution; and the secret of its power is God".²⁵ American Missionary Association, Home Missionary Society and American Board literature and preachers belaboured the imperative to work to change the social conditions of the masses both home and abroad. A Congregationalist institution of higher learning, Oberlin, from where John Dube obtained his education, had been a centre of social interest from the days of its founding. The American Congregational concern for social justice migrated to the shores of southern Africa with the advent of the American Board missionaries and was re-inculcated in its indigenous leaders during their sojourns in the United States.

Education

The three strains of the reformation described above coalesced in England to birth the Puritan movement after King Henry VIII's secession from the Roman Catholic Church in 1534. The 'Puritans' were thus named because they desired, through emphasis on the above three strands, 'purity' in worship, church governance

²³ Thabo Mbeki, "On the Occasion of the Bicentenary of the UCCSA", given in Cape Town, 31 March 1999. Found as the preface of: Steve de Gruchy, ed., *Changing Frontiers: The Mission Story of the UCCSA* (Gaborone: Pula, 1999), v-vi and viii-ix.

²⁴ Atkins and Fagley, *History of American Congregationalism*, 249. Atkins and Fagley cited: "The Congregational Conscience and Slavery", *Proceedings of the Fourth International Congregational Council*, Boston, 1920, 328-30.

²⁵ Atkins and Fagley, *History of American Congregationalism*, 251. Atkins and Fagley cited: Lyman Abbott, "What Is Christianity?", *Arena* 3, 1891, 46.

and personal life. Contestation about whether the Church of England could be reformed from within or from outside the communion existed amongst the Puritans. Those who became disillusioned with the possibility of reform broke away from the established church and thus became 'Separatists'. Separatists, such as Robert Browne and John Owen, advocated for the 'self-governance' of local congregations. Many Puritans immigrated to Holland to escape the persecution of Queen Mary.²⁶ From Amsterdam, some Puritans then embarked for the 'New World', North America, hoping to complete their journey to religious liberty. The Puritans established Boston, Massachusetts where in 1636 they founded Harvard University and later Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut to train its ministers. The influence of Congregationalism on United States' history and Luthuli's admiration of its ideals are further explored in chapter one. Nevertheless, the emphasis Congregationalism placed on education deserves brief mention, especially within the American context.

Luthuli mentioned in his autobiography that he did not realise during his formative years the extent to which his mother laboured to ensure his education.²⁷ Martin Luthuli, his uncle, and John Dube, his one time principal, also continued to foster in Luthuli the educational imperative. *History of American Congregationalism* highlighted the important concern Congregationalism placed on education. From that text, Luthuli once read the following bold historical declaration:

One must not read back into Seventeenth Century New England the perfected philosophy of a democratic society, but leaders of the little [New England] commonwealth knew by sound instinct that "if people were to follow the dictates of conscience, that conscience must be enlightened. If people were to govern themselves in church and state, opportunity for education must be provided". They laid the foundation of a public school system which was to continue in later years across the continent and become, perhaps, the finest single aspect of American life... What New England did for education was, therefore, done by Congregationalism.²⁸

²⁶ The Puritans were later referred to as 'Independents' following their return to England during the Commonwealth that the 'Lord Protector', Oliver Cromwell, a staunch Puritan, established.

²⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 11.

²⁸ Atkins and Fagley, *History of American Congregationalism*, 230.

Atkins and Fagley quote a publication entitled, "Proceedings of the Fourth International Congregational Council", Boston, 1920.

In his autobiography, Luthuli expressed great pride in the educational accomplishments of his Congregational community saying that as far as education is concerned, Groutville...

...has produced a distinguished little group – a university lecturer, an eminent scholar, the first African head of a training institution with a staff of mixed race and the first Zulu woman graduate.²⁹

Ecclesiastic Predecessors

Johannes van der Kemp

Congregational history in southern Africa began in 1799 when four 'missioners' sent from the London Missionary Society (LMS), founded just four years earlier, disembarked in Cape Town.³⁰ Two missioners set out to live among the Khoi San (indigenous southern Africans) in Namaqualand and two to serve the Blacks in the Eastern Cape. Lack of communication, weak leadership and missioners 'gone native' created much instability during the early years.³¹ In spite of those difficulties, over time, the LMS established missions in what are known now as the Northern Cape (RSA), Botswana, Zimbabwe and the Witwatersrand (RSA). Due to their relevancy to Congregationalism's ethos in southern Africa as they relate to Luthuli, four LMS missioners deserve special mention: Johannes van der Kemp, John Philip, David Livingstone and John Mackenzie.

Many consider Johannes van der Kemp (1747-1811) to be the first prominent human rights advocate in southern Africa. On 31 March 1899, van der Kemp arrived

²⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 11. See footnote 1.

³⁰ In conformity with contemporary terminology that seeks to evade pejorative and stereotyped associations, I use the terms "missioner" and "missioners" rather than "missionary" and "missionaries", respectively.

The LMS, like the American Board, was initially multi-denominational and thus ecumenical in nature. Nevertheless, the LMS was primarily Congregationalist in nature, especially after the Presbyterians and Anglicans withdrew to found their own mission instrumentalities.

Anthony Sillery wrote: "The basis of the Society was resolutely inter-denominational and declared that its 'fundamental principle' was not to send Presbyterian, Independency, Episcopacy or any other form of Church Order or Government..." The Society has always remained faithful to the principal of inter-denominationalism, but in practice most of its support has come from Congregationalists, and it has long regarded itself, as has been regarded, as Congregationalism's own missionary society.

Anthony Sillery, *John Mackenzie of Bechuanaland / 1835-1899: A Study in Humanitarian Imperialism* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1971), 5. Also:

D. Roy Briggs and Joseph Wing, *The Harvest and the Hope: The Story of Congregationalism in Southern Africa* (Johannesburg: The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, 1970), 13.

³¹ Esther Johnson, "Cape Town: The Establishing of Congregationalism in Southern Africa", in *Changing Frontiers*, de Gruchy, 20.

in Cape Town with three other colleagues, thus inaugurating the genesis of Congregational influence on the sub-continent. In 1803, van der Kemp founded a mission station at Bethelsdorp, near present day Uitenhage.³² The mission benefited the Khoi San, focusing on what is termed today as 'development' work rather than 'evangelism', per se. van der Kemp at this early stage laid a priority on education, agriculture, entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency that Luthuli also would encourage and facilitate as Chief of Grootville.

Gardens were started in the van der Kemp Kloof, and vegetables and fruit trees were planted. The people were able to feed themselves and the gardens also served as a source of income. A school and a church were built. It was here that the first spelling book was produced on South African soil. It contained 3,133 words of one syllable...Houses were erected, and a carpentry shop was started to help with building operations. A blacksmith shop was built to help with repairing the wheels of the wagons and carts. Leatherwork was begun for repairing the bridles and harnesses of horses...Wild flowers served as a source of income for the people at the mission station. The cultivation and preparation of aloes for export was another of the skills learned by the people.³³

It must be acknowledged that van der Kemp did not typify the average missionary. Controversy surrounded van der Kemp as he was seen by many, both friends within the LMS and foes amongst the colonist, as having 'gone native'. He took as a wife a young slave girl, thus offending both missiological and racial sensibilities. At Bethelsdorp, van der Kemp practiced inter-racial worship and taught his indigenous parishioners how to read and write, neither of which pleased the neighbouring burghers. Rather than establishing western designed structures, van der Kemp lived amongst the Khoi San in traditional huts and, by some accounts, even in traditional attire. van der Kemp constantly argued with local authorities regarding his mission, making him a most vilified nuisance. van der Kemp thwarted the colonists' desire for a local source of inexpensive labour though his efforts to expand literacy and economic self-sufficiency among his adherents.

³² Margaret Constable incorrectly related 1801 as the date for the establishment of the first Congregational church. After his efforts in "Kaffraria" failed due to instability in the area, van der Kemp returned to Graaf-Reinet in May 1801. The church that van der Kemp presumably served and left to colleagues was a Dutch Reformed Church. van der Kemp only arrived in Bethelsdorp on 02 June 1803 founding the first congregational 'mission'.

Margaret Constable, "The Eastern Cape: A Highway for God", in *Changing Frontiers*, de Gruchy, 24.
³³ Constable, "The Eastern Cape" in *Changing Frontiers*, de Gruchy, 24-5.

van der Kemp served his indigenous constituency as a renegade human rights activist. Though established a year after van der Kemp's death in 1812, the first circuit court, nicknamed the "Black Circuit", was infused with cases brought by his emboldened parishioners. One historian cited over fifty cases of murder being brought by the Khoi San against the Boer settlers.³⁴ Many of the cases brought to court could not be resolved given that many who filed charges did so retroactively.³⁵ Due to his temperament, van der Kemp likely engaged in hyperbole when accusing his antagonists while minimising or ignoring the infractions incurred by those whom he defended. The presence of emotive vitriol on both sides and the prolific number of court cases (many legitimate, many not) ultimately supported by the mission station evidenced that van der Kemp offered a safe haven for the Khoi San who suffered much oppression, exploitation and racism by the colonists. The legal battles forced a shift in settlers' views; colonists reluctantly realised that the indigenous people would struggle for their freedom and use the law to protect themselves as equals.³⁶

John Philip

In his Nobel Peace Prize speech, Luthuli credited John Philip (1775-1851), a prominent Congregationalist, for "[standing] for social justice in the face of overwhelming odds".³⁷ Philip arrived in southern Africa in 1819 to investigate charges that many LMS missionaries inappropriately carried out their vocations. As superintendent for the LMS, Philip served as the primary contact who invited the American Board to send missionaries to South Africa.³⁸ Philip's link with Congregationalism rests more solidly with his seventeen years of pastoral service as a Congregationalist minister in Aberdeen, Scotland prior to his arrival on the sub-continent. Also, after settling in Cape Town, Philip accepted an invitation to pastoral

³⁴ I. H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. T. van der Kemp, 1747-1811: Missionary, Pioneer and Protagonist of Racial Equality in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1988), 188.

³⁵ J. W. Hofmeyr and Gerald Pillay, eds., *A History of Christianity in South Africa* (Pretoria: HAUM Tertiary, 1994), 1: 52.

³⁶ Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. T. van der Kemp*, 188.

³⁷ Kader Asmal, David Chidester and Wilmot James, eds., *South Africa's Nobel Laureates: Peace, Literature and Science* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2004), 25.

³⁸ D. J. Kotzé, ed., *Letters of the American Missionaries (1835-1838)* (Cape Town: The Van Riebeeck Society, 1950), 8-45.

ministry provided that the church meeting be the governing authority of the church, thus in 1820 establishing the first Congregational church in South Africa.³⁹

Luthuli identified Philip in his Nobel Peace Prize speech as an “illustrious [man] of God” because Philip’s faith led him to advocate for human rights in southern Africa.⁴⁰ However, in the early 1800s, most described Philip as a cantankerous fool. The historian Frank Welsh called Philip “the chief Boer bugbear”.⁴¹ Luthuli also rightly mentioned in his Nobel Prize speech that Philip and others’ named are “still anathema to some South Africans”.⁴² One text claimed that “every South African school boy knows that Philip was notorious for fancying ideas about Black and White equality”.⁴³ Sir Lowry Cole once remarked that “Philip is, it is to be feared, more a *politician* than a missionary” (emphasis is Cole’s).⁴⁴ Though his advocacy was quieted by an argument to compensate slave owners for their lost property, Philip became a fierce abolitionist.

Born in Scotland, Philip hailed from the same locale as Adam Smith. Philip and other Congregationalists of European and American stock, thus found themselves imbued with the “Protestant work ethic” on which this investigation later comments. Smith argued that slave labour was economically counterproductive since those enslaved could not possess private property and thus had no reason to work productively.⁴⁵ Philip “evoked Smith to legitimise the civilising mission, its struggle against ‘vassalage’, and its commitment to the values of liberal individualism”.⁴⁶ Luthuli’s distaste for Communism is much in part due to this ecclesiastic heritage. Philip’s championing of the oppressed quickly made him a very controversial figure

³⁹ Although, Esther Johnson indicates 1822 as the date Philip accepted the pastorate. Esther Johnson, “Cape Town: The Establishing of Congregationalism in Southern Africa”, in *Changing Frontiers*, de Gruchy, 20.

⁴⁰ Asmal, Chidester and James, *South Africa’s Nobel Laureates*, 25.

⁴¹ Frank Welsh, *South Africa: A Narrative History* (New York: Kodansha International, 1999), 109.

⁴² Asmal, Chidester and James, *South Africa’s Nobel Laureates*, 25.

⁴³ Jay Naidoo, *Tracking Down Historical Myths* (Johannesburg: AD Donker, 1989), 49.

This text explored an interesting debate: the historical ‘myth’ that Philip was a segregationist. The debate concludes that he was not by making a historical contextualised differentiation of the words “segregation and “separation”. “Segregation” involves a motive to subjugate while Philip argued for a policy to ‘separate’ so as to protect. For Philip, separation was not the ideal, but rather a desperate tactic to avoid complete dispossession of indigenous land and to preserve some modicum of freedom and independence.

⁴⁴ Briggs and Wing, *The Harvest and the Hope*, 37.

⁴⁵ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. E. Cannan, (London: The Modern Library, original addition dated 1776, 1937), 365.

⁴⁶ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1: 119. Comaroff cited:

John Comaroff, “Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa”, *American Ethnologist* 16, 1989, 661-85.

in his day. Through his numerous tours in the region and the regular reports he received from outlying missionaries, Philip kept himself and the metropole abreast of the circumstances of the Cape peninsula to a much greater extent than even the local governing authorities did. Philip first ran afoul with white settlers due to his prolific advocacy for the Khoi San. Through his lobbying efforts to the Colonial Office in London, Philip participated in the entrenchment Ordinance 50 (1828), legislation that provided the Khoi San and other 'Coloureds' full legal and civil rights.⁴⁷ This ordinance included legislation for equality before the law, regulation of oppressive work contracts, prohibition of excessive punishment and land ownership.⁴⁸ As an arbiter for the Treaty System, introduced in 1836, Philip lobbied for more favourable colonial policies toward of the Xhosa and Sotho-Tswana. Philip, for right or wrong, believed his advocacy for the Treaty System would encourage legislation prohibiting further settler encroachment and dispossession of Blacks' land.

Much to the chagrin of white supremacists, Philip consistently argued that the races were equal in cerebral capacity. Philip wrote that it was the lack of education that created a difference in intellectual achievement. Philip's understanding of the equality of the races led him to pontificate on the need for oppressed races to be socially equal to Whites as well. Philip, constantly accused of "meddling", retorted to his critics:

If a minister is guilty of dereliction of his duty in advocating the cause of the oppressed, or in relieving the necessities of the destitute, I plead guilty to the charge...I could not see the Mission destroyed, nor the aborigines trampled in the dust...without attempting to relieve them by legal means.⁴⁹

David Livingstone

Luthuli also admired David Livingstone (1813-1873), a protégé of John Philip, a Congregationalist and a missionary of note. In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Luthuli noted that Livingstone's ideals and legacy inspired his own. Unfortunately, Livingstone is known more as an explorer searching for the source of

⁴⁷ Philip was often accused of a sense of self-importance and prone, like van der Kemp, to statements of grandiosity. Philip contributed to the incorrect perception that he was the sole agent responsible for the passage of Ordinance 50 rather than an advocate of its concretisation by Order-in-Council.

⁴⁸ Hofmeyr and Pillay, *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, 1: 56.

⁴⁹ Briggs and Wing, *The Harvest and the Hope*, 37.

the Nile, being “lost” and then found by William Stanley, than as a missionary. Livingstone was a deeply spiritual man. Martin Dugard noted with dismay that Livingstone was “too *religious*” to be an epic adventurer (Dugard’s emphasis).

His spiritual aura was so great that even the Arab slave raiders against whom he battled so vehemently said he possessed the intangible known as *baraka*, uplifting and blessing all coming into contact with him.⁵⁰

A`la van der Kemp, Livingstone proved particularly adept at immersing himself within the indigenous context, often being accused of ‘going native’. Wherever he went, he worked assiduously to learn the local language, always eating with and residing amongst the ‘native’ population. For this reason, Livingstone spoke scathingly against slavery and used his fame as an explorer to vociferously lobby for its abolition. As much as the search of the Nile and the propagation of the Gospel, the elimination of the slave trade seemed to be Livingstone’s life passion. For Livingstone, slavery resulted in the destruction of a people and his ire was so raised by it that, despite his otherwise diminutive demeanour, Livingstone would often express public rage on his speaker’s circuit. In 1856, Livingstone resigned from the LMS after spending fifteen years in Africa, perhaps realising that his fame as an intrepid explorer enabled him to be a far more potent weapon against slavery than that of a benign missionary.

Livingstone’s contribution to human rights in Africa is not well known. Andrew Ross suggests that Livingstone’s stances were not compatible with nineteenth and twentieth century ecclesiastical history that shied away from casting a shadow on British imperialism. If one examines the biographies of Livingstone, one will note that Livingstone’s support of the ‘Hottentot Rebellion’ of 1851 and his justification of Blacks’ rights to utilise violence against Boers and English settlers alike are not mentioned.⁵¹ Livingstone’s advocacy for human rights led him to be a proponent of British colonialism (or ‘benevolent imperialism’), so as to stamp-out slavery.⁵² Livingstone resigned from the LMS to focus his efforts as an abolitionist utilising the

⁵⁰ Martin Dugard, *Into Africa: The Epic Adventures of Stanley & Livingstone* (New York: Broadway Books, 2003), 2.

⁵¹ Andrew Ross, *John Philip (1775-1851): Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa* (Aberdeen, Aberdeen University, 1986), 2, see endnote 1 on 229.

⁵² In 1834, slavery had been abolished in all British colonies and protectorates.

three 'Cs': Christianity, Commerce and Colonialism.⁵³ Yet even within ecclesiastic history texts, Livingstone is not given much merit for his contribution to human rights advancement. This is due to the fact that then, as well as now, the church frowns upon clergy who take-up 'secular' vocations, appointments or passions even if those 'secondments' forward the ethos of the church more than actual grassroots ministry.⁵⁴ Briggs and Wing, in their history of Congregationalism in southern Africa, condescendingly suggest that Livingstone and others "did little more than hoist the Gospel banner" rather than "occupy" and "take possession" of "the country far beyond", as 'they should have'.⁵⁵

One is able to observe within southern African Congregationalism a tendency for lay and ordained leaders to abandon a vocation linked or synonymous with the church for vocations more secular in nature. Though inspired by their Congregational brand of Christianity, many leaders found the Church to be too conservative and lethargic an instrument by which to achieve ambitious goals. Like Dube to education, ka Seme to law, Livingstone to anthropology and geography and even Luthuli to politics, John Mackenzie was drawn to the rather unusual and oxymoronic craft of "humanitarian imperialism".⁵⁶

John Mackenzie

Undoubtedly, one of the "other illustrious men" who is unnamed in Luthuli's Nobel acceptance speech is John Mackenzie (1835-1899). Born on 30 August 1835 in Scotland to poor and simple parents, Mackenzie began his studies to become a missionary in 1855 under the tutelage of a Congregationalist minister in Bedford, England. Mackenzie soon left the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Apparently, the most independent of Nonconformist churches far better suited Mackenzie than the more authoritarian and hierarchical ecclesiology that too resembled the Anglican episcopacy. Mackenzie soon became convinced that "Congregational Independency

⁵³ Dugard, *Into Africa*, 67.

⁵⁴ This study observes this motif in Luthuli's life as he effectively utilised the political realm rather than the ecclesiastic realm (and forfeited his Christian, *Amakhohwa*, chieftaincy) to forward the struggle for liberation as a leader of the ANC.

⁵⁵ Briggs and Wing, *The Harvest and the Hope*, 162.

⁵⁶ Livingstone supported colonialism in an effort to abolish the slave trade.

is the form of government laid down in the New Testament for the Churches of Christ”.⁵⁷

In 1873, the LMS appointed Mackenzie to oversee the Moffat Mission at Kuruman. Like so many Congregational missionaries of note, and similar to Luthuli, the confines of the Church proved too restrictive and the call of the Gospel led beyond parish leadership to political leadership. While at Kuruman, Mackenzie became a vociferous advocate of land rights for indigenous Africans. While disputes between the Transvaal Republic and the Tswana tribes increased, Mackenzie’s bias for those whom he served led him to argue to the British government that a commission should be established to prevent unscrupulous Whites from expropriating tribal territories. Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of the Cape, requested Mackenzie to become Commissioner for the government. Mackenzie was interested in the position, but not at the expense of his mission work at Kuruman, for he knew that the LMS would not permit him to serve ‘two masters’. By the 1880s, two recently constituted Boer Republics (Stellaland and Goshen) were poised to utilise conflict between them to expropriate land from the Batswana. Mackenzie’s efforts to enlist the British government’s intervention eventually led him to England wherein the London Convention of 1883-1884 effectively guaranteed protection for the Batswana within British Bechuanaland. In doing so, Mackenzie earned from the infuriated Boers the distinction of being labelled a “meddling missionary”.⁵⁸

Returning to South Africa in 1884, Mackenzie accepted for a short time the position of Resident Commissioner of Bechuanaland, thus resigning from the LMS as did Livingstone to focus on his abolitionist efforts. For six years thereafter, Mackenzie worked unsuccessfully to extend British protection for the indigenous people residing in an area from the Orange River to the Zambezi. To Mackenzie’s credit, the Cape Colony incorporated British Bechuanaland in 1895 thus avoiding the same corporate ownership under Cecil Rhodes that affected Matabeleland in 1889.

Polity, Ethics and Violence

To interpret Luthuli, one must be cognisant of the religious faith that primarily motivated him. Any historical inquiry that ignores the role of Luthuli’s specific faith

⁵⁷ Sillery, *John Mackenzie of Bechuanaland*, 4.

⁵⁸ Briggs and Wing, *The Harvest and the Hope*, 175.

tradition fails to analyse him adequately, if at all. As mentioned in the preface, historical commentators have frequently referenced Luthuli's 'strong Christian character'. A review of biographic material on Luthuli reveals that the superficial designation 'Christian' is to some so assumed or benign that it is not analysed.

Alpheus Zulu once reminded an audience:

[Luthuli] became famous for his political exploits with the result that many of his other qualities were almost submerged. Those of us who were intimately associated with [Luthuli] know well that he would have desired to be remembered first as a Christian. This point needs to be emphasised especially in our day when many people doubt the relevance of the Christian faith in the struggle for building a happy and free South African society. All his labours were the expression of Christian faith.⁵⁹

For others, the designation 'Christian' is so inconvenient that it is easily ignored or dismissed as trivial.

While Luthuli allied himself with many Christian leaders of various traditions, from Roman Catholic to Quaker, Congregationalism proved to be the seminal influence that guided his decisions. While strategic considerations influenced Luthuli not to support the ANC's turn to violence, faith-based considerations ultimately prevented him from accepting and endorsing violent strategies to attain liberation, hence this study is entitled "Bound by Faith". Lifelong Congregational influences and many Christian associations wed Luthuli to non-violent methods as likeminded Christians at the time perceived violence to be antithetical to the Christian faith within the South African context.

Intentionally, this study does not interrogate the definitions or nuances of 'pacifism' and 'violence'. Within 'pacifism' and 'violence' there is a very wide spectrum of understandings. Both terms are meaning laden and each requires a dissertation to unpack. Research has not uncovered any definition, explanation or qualification for either term by Luthuli. Therefore, it is therefore unwise to conceptualise them extraneous to the 'standard' definitions that Luthuli would likely have understood and the meanings that he most likely intended to articulate. Suffice to say, herein, the terms 'violence' and 'pacifism' are taken from the Oxford

⁵⁹ UKZN, APC&SA, PC80/1/1/2, Bishop Alpheus Zulu, Inaugural Address of the Albert Luthuli College, 15 March 1977, 1.

Dictionary and are used in the most generic manner. Pacifism is: 'The belief that disputes should be settled by peaceful means and that war and violence are unjustifiable'. A pacifist is one who subscribes to the above belief. This definition does not include qualifications or exceptions inherent in the statement that "war and violence are unjustifiable". Violence is: 'Behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill'. The operative term here is 'physical force'. This study interprets that this definition does not restrict itself to physical force against human beings; the definition allows for the inclusion of structures. Thus, the definition includes sabotage as sabotage involves a physical force that damages. Later, chapter six makes the distinction between a pacifist and a non-pacifist who advocates the use of pacifist strategies.

To support the thesis linking Luthuli's stance on violence to his Christian faith, the advocacy of non-violence must be specifically linked to Congregationalism within the South African context. Therefore, an examination of Congregationalism's stance on violence is here required. Demonstrating the link between Congregationalism and non-violence is problematic for three reasons.

First, like most mainline denominations, Congregationalism does not hold pacifism as a religious tenet as do Quakers or other faith communities within the Anabaptist movement, such as the Mennonites.⁶⁰ Congregationalism, like Christianity in general during its history, does not inherently oppose the use of force in appropriate contexts.⁶¹ Within the South African context, a deep contradiction was held by South African Christians in general and Congregationalists who opposed the liberation movements' use of violence yet did not necessarily (or, consistently) denounce the daily institutionalised violence perpetrated by the South African state.⁶² Contradictions even existed with those who preached non-violence. For example, Frank Chikane, former Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches, once confided:

⁶⁰ American Friends Service Committee, *South Africa: Challenge and Hope*, rev. ed., Lyle Tatum, ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987).

John de Gruchy, "Radical Peace-Making: The Challenge of Some Anabaptists", in *Theology & Violence*, Villa-Vicencio, 173-85.

⁶¹ Douglas Bax, "From Constantine to Calvin: The Doctrine of the Just War", in *Theology & Violence*, Villa-Vicencio, 147-71.

⁶² *The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church*, 2nd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans), 1996.

With regard to my own non-violent stance, the contradictions began to appear after I was released on bail during the treason trial of 1985. My house and my family were attacked with petrol bombs and my name was discovered to be on a hit list. At the time, I was preaching non-violence and preparing my case to show how peaceful I was, while the community organised itself to protect me from those agents of the apartheid system who were threatening my life. I was confronted with the reality of armed people who were committed to preserving my life and the lives of my family. I was obliged to admit that I was only able to continue preaching non-violence because others were prepared to use violence to create this space for me. There comes a time when one cannot preach non-violence without recognising the hypocrisy of enjoying a security provided by violent means.⁶³

Second, despite the above, within the South African context during the 1960s when the ANC decided to form *MK*, South Africans within the mainline denominations, including Congregationalists, generally assumed only non-violent methods to be legitimate means by which to oppose Apartheid. In 1961, so pervasive was the assumption that only non-violent methods were legitimate that churches did not discuss, debate or even consider the utilisation of violent measures. Seemingly irreconcilable are the two claims that ‘Congregationalism does not advocate pacifism’ and ‘Congregationalists assumed exclusively non-violent methods as legitimate’. Racism in part sources the contradiction between the first claim by Congregationalists (and South African Christians in general) during the 1960s that violence can be necessary and moral and the second claim that assumed only non-violent methods were legitimate in the struggle for South Africa’s liberation. Black Christians across the ecclesiastical spectrum also expressed this hypocrisy concerning the legitimate use of violence. This contradiction poses a difficult obstacle for the presentation of deductive or documentary evidence that Congregationalism, by its nature, influenced Luthuli to refrain from supporting the turn to violence.

Third, Congregationalism is, by the very nature of its polity, decentralised. Individual members and churches are independent in matters of conscience. Little or no hierarchy exists whereby official and authoritative rulings are established to which members and churches must abide. As discussed earlier in this introduction,

⁶³ Frank Chikane, “Where the Debate Ends”, in *Theology & Violence*, Villa-Vicencio, 303-4. Chikane also mentioned: “The recent case of Mrs. Coretta King was a classic example. In order to undertake her mission of peace in South Africa in line with the non-violence tradition of her husband Martin Luther King, she had to be protected by security police” (303). It must be remembered, King depended on the use of force by the National Guard and Federal Bureau of Investigation to protect those actively involved in the non-violent civil rights movement.

Congregationalism is highly democratic and allows for a wide divergence of views. Doctrines, edicts and encyclicals are not a part of the Congregational tradition. Those who serve within the instrumentalities of the wider Congregational family may speak 'to' churches but may not speak 'for' them without their collective consent. In other words, the wider church may prophetically lead and direct, but not dictate to, local churches. Also, the wider church can with approval represent the views of the local churches rather than unilaterally decide what those views are.

The lack of 'authoritative' structures and uniform creeds creates dearth of material documenting 'the' or 'a' Congregational stance towards violence in South Africa in 1961. However, the 1970 reaction of the union of Congregational churches (the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, UCCSA) to a World Council of Churches' (WCC) resolution pledging to support for movements that may employ violence to achieve liberation through a special fund under the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) assists this study in circumnavigating the above articulated archival hurdle.

In 1970, the UCCSA's Fourth Assembly statement concerning the WCC's PCR disclosed a conservative undercurrent concerning the use of violence within the white, black and coloured churches. Though many of the denomination's leaders were progressive, outspoken and exhibited prophetic actions, the grassroots of the church could not countenance even indirect support of any armed liberation movements. Many texts highlight the saga of the controversial WCC decision to support liberation movements opposed to Apartheid through the PCR special fund.⁶⁴ A detailed chronology of events concerning the WCC's PCR special fund is not necessary for this study's purposes, though a cursory overview is required.

In 1968, the Assembly of the WCC met in Uppsala where it declared that "racism is a blatant denial of the Christian faith" and "urged that the World Council of Churches undertake a crash programme to guide the Council and the member

⁶⁴ John de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), 127-38. Pauline Webb, ed. *A Long Struggle: The Involvement of the World Council of Churches in South Africa* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1994), 102-15.

Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Trapped in Apartheid: A Socio-Theological History of the English-Speaking Churches* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988), 109-15.

World Council of Churches (Programme to Combat Racism), "From Cottesloe to Cape Town, Challenges for the Church in a Post-Apartheid South Africa", *PCR Information* 30, 1991, 84-6.

churches in the urgent matter of racism".⁶⁵ As a result, in 1969 a WCC sponsored Consultation on Racism in Notting Hill, London itemised many directives. The final step concluded: "that all else failing, the Church and churches support resistance movements, including revolutions, which are aimed at the elimination of political or economic tyranny which makes racism possible".⁶⁶ The same year, the WCC Central Committee met in Canterbury and established the PCR while confessing that it has done "too little and too late" in response to many wars of liberation in Africa, the civil rights movement in the United States and the banning of South Africa's ANC. The WCC Central Committee committed itself to implement a "determined attack on racism".⁶⁷ In 1970, the PCR established a special fund that would contribute financially to "organisations that combat racism, rather than welfare organisations that alleviate the effects of racism...", i.e., liberation movements.⁶⁸

In a chapter from *A Long Struggle: The Involvement of the World Council of Churches in South Africa*, entitled "Eloquent Action", Baldwin Sjollema detailed the immediate reactions of the South African member churches of the WCC, Congregationalist included, to the PCR. In summary, the South African churches expressed much righteous indignation. The fact that the WCC did not consult, and consequently its announcement came as a surprise to its South African member churches, only exacerbated matters. The South African government seized the initiative by characterising the PCR as a mechanism by which the Communist infiltrated WCC would aid and abet "terrorists". The South African Prime Minister, Vorster ranted against the WCC in parliament. The Minister of Foreign Affairs accused the intended WCC programme of supporting liberation movements...

⁶⁵ World Council of Churches (Programme to Combat Racism), Ans J. van der Bent, ed., "Breaking Down the Walls: Statements and Actions on Racism 1948-1985", *PRC Information, Special Report*, 1986, 34-5. Statement from the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Uppsala, "Report on Section IV, Towards Justice and Peace in International Affairs", 1968.

⁶⁶ Statement from the WCC Sponsored Consultation on Racism, Notting Hill, London, 19-24 May 1969.

World Council of Churches, *PRC Information, Special Report*, 1986, 37.

⁶⁷ Statement from the Central Committee, Canterbury, "Recommendation Regarding and Ecumenical Programme to Combat Racism", 1969.

World Council of Churches (Programme to Combat Racism), *PRC Information, Special Report*, 1986, 39.

⁶⁸ Statement from the WCC Executive Committee, Arnoldshain, Germany. "Recommendations by the International Advisory Committee for the Programme to Combat Racism Regarding Special Fund as Adopted by WCC Executive Committee", September 1970.

World Council of Churches, *PRC Information, Special Report*, 1986, 41.

...whose actions consist of crimes of violence like murder, arson, armed robbery and others which are aimed at all sections of the civilian population, including women and children.⁶⁹

Despite its global focus, the negative publicity surrounding the PCR quickly focused specifically on the South African anti-Apartheid movement. Despite the many, diverse and exclusively non-violent planks of its plan, antagonistic commentators reduced the PCR to gun-running. The fallout from the PCR in South Africa lingered for many years and caused enormous strain between the WCC and its South African member churches.

In the wake of the announcement to create the PCR, the Secretary of the UCCSA, Joseph Wing, clearly articulated to the South African government and its members that any form of violence, be it by the government or the liberation movements, could not be condoned by the church.⁷⁰ As the UCCSA concluded its Fourth Assembly, Wing could articulate the thought of the denomination when he said:

The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa is of the opinion that the racial situation in South Africa cannot be minimised and that it calls for responsible Christian action. We are equally convinced that the forces which produce change are inherent in the Gospel and that Christians cannot repudiate the "ministry of reconciliation" to which it has been called and resort to methods which may result in one form of racialism being replaced by another... We believe that racial discrimination can only be changed by a change in outlook leading to racial reconciliation. For this reason, we abhor and therefore reject violence and terror and pledge ourselves to work, by means consistent with the Gospel, for racial harmony and goodwill.⁷¹

For a mainline and Reformed denomination, the UCCSA possessed, at the time of Luthuli's 1967 death, what could be for the time and context, a progressive racial viewpoint, having merged white, black and coloured mission churches to form a new denomination in the midst of Apartheid. Later, the UCCSA may have been considered 'radical' by some concerning its anti-Apartheid stances, with many of its ministers being arrested, detained and incarcerated for protesting white supremacist

⁶⁹ Baldwin Sjollem, "Eloquent Action", in *A Long Struggle*, Pauline Webb, 15.

⁷⁰ UHOA, WCC, correspondence from Rev. Joseph Wing to Rev. Richard Sales, 25 September 1970. de Gruchy and van der Water, *Spirit Undaunted*, 10-3 and 143.

⁷¹ UHOA, WCC, correspondence from Rev. Joseph Wing to Rev. Richard Sales, 25 September 1970.

rule.⁷² However, contained within the diversity of the UCCSA was the conservative nature of South African Christians who decried racism, yet did scarcely anything proactive about undermining it.

The Congregationalist response to the WCC's 1970 PCR suggests the type of response most of Luthuli's South African Christian colleagues would have had to his alleged countenance of violent tactics in 1961 when the ANC launched *MK*. The Congregational response to the ecclesial debate surrounding violence reveals the views of those whose succour and praise Luthuli received throughout his political career. Though not pacifist, the wider Christian church in South Africa (then still primarily governed by liberal Whites who opposed racism theoretically but would never support violence practically) would have certainly viewed Luthuli's support of *MK* as a betrayal of their mutually shared values. The result would have created rifts in relationships that Luthuli held so dear. By affirming only non-violent methods after *MK*'s launch, Luthuli did not sacrifice his mutually shared values with and thus the support of white Christian liberals who he judged on the global scale would be the strategic key to a bloodless liberation.

Though occurring in 1970, nine years after the ANC launched *MK*, the events surrounding the WCC's decision to support liberation movements illuminates many points simultaneously. Though Congregationalists are not generally pacifists and the wider church did not dictate a uniform or authoritative position on violence to which its members and churches adhered, most Congregationalists in 1961 opposed any form of violent opposition to Apartheid. Most importantly, the surprised reaction of mainline church denominations to the WCC's support of liberation movements connotes that not until 1970 did most Christians substantively question and debate for the first time the legitimacy of violence within the South African context. This underscores the understanding that mainline churches, Congregationalists being no exception, assumed that only non-violent methods should be utilised to oppose Apartheid in 1961. Luthuli's consistent opposition to the use of violence to oppose Apartheid coincided with mainline denominations' pre-1970 opposition to the use of

⁷² For example, in 1980 the police arrested and detained Rev. John Thorne and three colleagues for trying to bring demands of students to the attention of authorities. Wing then organised fifty-three ministers to protest their detention. This action led their arrest and detention. Jim Bailey, ed., *The Beat of Drum: The Rise of Africa*, "The Day the Bishops Went to Jail" (Braamfontein: Raven, 2001), featured in *Drum*'s July 1980 issue, 4-5, 8. Steve de Gruchy and Desmond van der Water, eds., *Spirit Undaunted: The Life and Legacy of Joseph Wing* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2005), 71.

violence. Furthermore, Luthuli's consistent opposition to violence prefigured the mainline denominations' nuanced and theologically consistent stance best articulated by Allan Boesak and Desmond Tutu in the 1980s that justified violence while simultaneously advocating strictly non-violent methods of resistance; that is, the church disavowed pacifism while advocating its strategies. For example, Tutu conveyed Luthuli's non-violence stance coupled with Luthuli's "No one can blame..." philosophy when he stated:

We are driven...to invoke a non-violent method which we believe is likely to produce the desired result. If this option is denied us, what then is left? If sanctions should fail there is no other way but to fight. Should the west fail to inspire sanctions it would, in my view, be justifiable for Blacks to try to overthrow an unjust system violently. But I must continue to work to bring an end to the present tyranny by non-violent means. Should this option fail, the low intensity civil war...will escalate in to a full-scale war. When that happens, heaven help us all. The Armageddon will have come!⁷³

Luthuli's ecclesiastic roots ran much deeper than his political roots that began rather late in his life. Luthuli possessed stronger ecclesiastic relationships than political. Brookes, Huddleston, Reuling, Collins, Michael Scott, Lavinia Scott, Reeves, Hepple, Taylor, Mary-Louise Hooper and Charles and Sheila Hooper, Atkins, Brueckner and many others identified in this study typified Luthuli's mainstay of support. In 1970, the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations issued clear rejections of violence as a means to bring about political change and pledged to work for the removal of injustices by peaceful means. Luthuli's public support for the use of violence would have constituted a personal and ideological betrayal to all of the above churches that belonged to an ecumenical body Luthuli at one time served as Vice-President. The opposition of the UCCSA to the hint of even indirectly supporting violence through the WCC⁷ strongly suggests the degree to which the wider church and Luthuli's Congregationalist colleagues would have reacted to his support of violence in 1961.

⁷³ Desmond Tutu, "Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?", in *Theology & Violence*, Villa-Vicencio, 3 and 77.

Chapter One

The Home of My Fathers¹

The revolution which Christianity brought into the lives of converts was profound, as can perhaps be imagined. Conversion meant an entirely new way of life, a new outlook, a new set of beliefs – the creation, almost, of a new kind of people. They were still Zulus to the backbone – that remained unchanged except for a few irrelevant externals. But they were Christian Zulus, not heathen Zulus, and conversion affected their lives to the core. -- Albert Luthuli²

Introduction

Most ANC leaders during the 1960s, particularly those arising from the ANC Youth League, received their education at Christian mission schools (for example, Duma Nokwe (St. Peter's), Oliver Tambo (Holy Cross and St. Peter's), Wilson Conco (Mariannhill), Ashby Mda (Mariazell), Robert Sobukwe (Healdtown), Nelson Mandela (Healdtown) and Walter Sisulu (All Saints). While these schools provided the intellectual tools with which they would prosecute the liberation struggle, they did not usually succeed in instilling a theological ethos that would form the basis of their being. Rarely did their specific faith traditions determine the basis of who they were and how they thought. Perhaps only Zechariah Matthews' Methodism approaches the degree to which a specific faith tradition influenced an ANC leader to the extent that it did Luthuli. Luthuli's roots in Congregationalism were deep and extensive, stretching back three generations. Congregationalism defined his home, school, vocation and spiritual life and his political life did not take precedence over these. Though those political colleagues who knew and worked with Luthuli grew very affectionate of him and deeply respected his integrity, a distance between them and he existed, caused by the profound gravity with which the Christian and Congregational faith bound him. Some were uncomfortable with his prayers before each meal, others with the grace he extended to antagonists and others by his unwillingness to achieve liberation by force, if necessary. Early in his teaching career, Luthuli's Christian associations fostered a propensity to charitably interpret others thus precluding

¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 1.

This is also the title of *Let My People Go*'s first chapter.

² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 4.

embitterment and disillusionment and enabling his patience for political reform to outlast that of his many lieutenants.

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

The mission arm of the Congregationalist church, the American Board [of Commissioners] for Foreign Mission (the Board) was founded in 1810 at Andover Seminary in Massachusetts.³ In 1812, the Board began its early mission activities in India.⁴ For the next twenty years, the Board expanded its reach to Ceylon, Turkey, Greece, Hawaii and to west and central Africa. The first mission to Africa failed.⁵ The failure, caused by the infiltration of traders and colonial powers prejudicing the indigenous population against the missionaries, likely haunted the American Board. Later, the Board became convinced that it needed to withdraw in southern Africa when conditions became similarly unviable.⁶

The Board's presence in southern Africa was catalysed by John Philip, the Superintendent of mission in southern Africa for the LMS. Philip, a strong advocate for indigenous human rights and a politically contentious character, ultimately recommended to the Board in 1833 that it send missionaries to the Matabele (inland) and Amazulu (maritime) fields.⁷ In 1835, the Board sent missionaries to southern Africa, specifically to its most south eastern coast known as Natal. Following their arrival in Cape Town in February, these missionaries arrived on the banks of what is now Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa in 1836.

The Board's arrival in South Africa coincided with the Great Trek and Dingane's violent encounter with Piet Retief and has remained to this day, through its descendent mission boards, an integral participant in South Africa's history. Upon

³ Actually, the ABCFM was, like the LMS, ecumenical or interdenominational rather than exclusively Congregational, composing itself of Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed Dutch missionaries. Nevertheless, both organisations became, for all intents and purposes, Congregational. Note: "of Commissioners" was eventually deleted from the instrumentality's name.

⁴ Some would argue it began in 1806, during the famous "Haystack Meeting" when five seminarians, inspired by a terrifying thunderstorm, pledged themselves to propagate mission work.

⁵ Kwazulu-Natal National Archives (KZNA), Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository (PAR), American Board Mission (AMB), A608, D/1/90/91, no author cited, "Historical Sketch of West Central African Mission", pamphlet published by the American Board of Commissioner for Foreign Missions, Boston, 1886.

⁶ Ian Booth, "Natal and Zululand: The Work of the American Board Mission", *Changing Frontiers*, de Gruchy, 80-2.

⁷ Kotzé, *Letters of the American Missionaries*, 9-11 and 28-45.

Philip's referral, six American Board missionaries from five states (Daniel Lindley and Alexander Wilson from North Carolina, Henry Venable from Kentucky, Aldin Grout from Massachusetts, George Champion from Connecticut and Newton Adams from New York) and their wives encountered innumerable difficulties that disrupted progress in both the inland mission to Mzilikazi's Matebele (Mosega) and the maritime mission to Dingane's *Amazulu* (Kwazulu and Natal) due to the Voortrekkers diffusion throughout the land that engendered violent clashes. Grout, Adams and Champion and their families were sent to establish the maritime mission in Natal while Lindley, Venable and Wilson and their families were to establish the inland mission. The inland mission failed and the missionaries consolidated their efforts in Natal. By May 1836, Adams settled on the Umlazi River (Natal), Champion and Grout on the Umsunduzi River (Zululand), Lindley at Illovo River (Natal), and Venable and Wilson on the Umhlatuzi River (Zululand). The American Board was the first mission entity to arrive in Natal to establish mission stations; it was not the last. Vukile Khumalo pointed out that from 1850 to 1900, "Natal was one of the most heavily evangelised regions of the globe".⁸ Khumalo's claim was not hyperbole. Norman Etherington asserted the following:

No other quarter of nineteenth century Africa was so thickly invested with Christian evangelists. The Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions estimated in 1880 that the number of missionaries in Natal was proportionally greater to any other community on the globe two or three times over. By the turn of the century in Natal alone there were 40,000 communicants and 10,000 adherents to Christianity. Most of the converts lived in mission reserves and they occupied about 175,000 acres of land.⁹

Grout and his wife, Hannah Davis, arrived with the other families in Cape Town on 05 February 1835 and proceeded to Natal via Bethelsdorp, arriving on 21 December 1835. Grout wasted no time and set off for northern Zululand where he had an audience with King Dingane at Umgungundhlovu on 16 January 1836. Grout

⁸ Vukile Khumalo, "Head Rings or Top Hats? An Inquiry into the Shifting Meaning of Body Coverings in Nineteenth Century Kwazulu-Natal", *Chicago Art Journal*, Spring 2001, 41-2, footnote 15.

⁹ Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southern Africa, 1835-1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 275.

perceived that he was hosted with “the utmost kindness and attention”.¹⁰ With Champion, they were able to establish a mission station called *Ginani* (“I am with you”) and a school as Dingane’s priority was education. Returning to Bethelsdorp to bring his wife north, Grout found that she was seriously ill and soon died on 24 February of tuberculosis a few weeks after giving birth to a daughter, Oriana. In December 1836, Grout retreated to the United States, delivering his daughter and Wilson’s motherless daughter to the care of relatives. While in the United States, Grout managed to convince Charlotte Bailey from Mount Holyoke to marry him and returned to Natal in June 1840.

The inland mission was abandoned in 1837 due to Mrs. Wilson’s death and the Dutch settlers’ destruction of the structures in their attack on the Matabele. The inland mission joined forces in August with their maritime compatriots in Natal.¹¹ During this time the Board was suffering financial difficulties. An 1837 circular from Boston issued to missionaries in the field read:

You will doubtless have heard, before this reaches you, of the commercial distress which has come upon our country, and upon the whole mercantile world. It began to be felt here last summer, and has ever since been growing more severe. Owing to this in part and partly to the fact that a number of the missions had increased their expenditures with unexpected rapidity, - though not more rapidly than the state of the mission seemed to require - - the Board last fall was indebted nearly 39,000 dollars... Your expenses must therefore be reduced, at any sacrifice, to the prescribed limits, or greater evils - affecting the credit and stability of the Board, the sending forth of missionaries, and your own personal support - will ensue.¹²

War had broken out between the Voortrekkers and the Zulu in the wake of Piet Retief’s ill-fated visit to Dingane where he, his delegation, and followers were killed. Retief’s political threats, articulated as theological threats, likely soured Dingane’s opinion of missionaries in his land. In April 1838, the maritime mission was, like the inland mission, abandoned and destroyed due to both Boer and Zulu conflict when the Zulu army invaded Port Natal. Lindley began independently serving the Boers in Pietermaritzburg. Lindley justified this decision to serve the white population with a

¹⁰ Aldin Grout, “A Narrative of the Establishment of the American Mission in Natal”, *The Natal Star*, 25 June 1856, 2. Cited by:

Kotzé, *Letters of the American Missionaries*, 96-7.

¹¹ Booth, “Natal and Zululand”, in *Changing Frontiers*, de Gruchy, 81.

¹² Kotzé, *Letters of the American Missionaries*, 178 and 182.

surprising degree of prescience given the evils of the Apartheid regime that began some one hundred years later. Lindley wrote:

I do sincerely believe that the cheapest, speediest, and easiest way to convert the heathen here is to convert the white ones first. More, the Whites must be provided for, or we labour in vain to make Christians out of the Blacks. These two classes will come so fully and constantly in contact with each other, that the influence of the Whites, if evil, will be tremendous – will be irresistible, without a miracle to prevent. To their own vices the aborigines will add those of the white man, and thus make themselves two-fold more the children of hell than they were before.¹³

By August 1843, the Board decided to abort the mission in southern Africa until Philip pleaded with them not to close it. The mission work flourished, comparatively speaking, from this point on. Taking Grout and Adams as examples, a church was founded by Grout near the Umvoti River where he served for twenty-five years until his retirement in 1870. In 1846, Adams confirmed the first Zulu convert, Mbulasi Makanya, to the Christian faith.¹⁴

Lindley, Adams and Grout are pre-eminent examples of the influence the Board's presence had in southern Africa. Their influence comes not necessarily from their own contributions, but rather from the indigenous descendants of those nurtured within the Christian environments that they engendered. Like their American Congregationalists before them who established Harvard and Yale, American missionaries in South Africa founded educational institutions that produced some of South Africa's most distinguished leaders.¹⁵ Though, rather than groom distinguished leaders, missionaries intended education to primarily be a means to bring people into the Christian faith. For example, the object of education of females, such as Nokukhanya Bhengu at Inanda Seminary, in the nineteenth and twentieth century was, for right or for wrong, to educate suitable companions for indigenous pastors and by familial example, to propagate the faith.

¹³ Correspondence to Boston from Rev. Daniel Lindley in 1839. Cited in: Edwin Smith, *The Life and Times of Daniel Lindley 1801-1880* (England: Epworth, 1949), 160.

¹⁴ The early beginnings were difficult to say the least. Today, as one surveys the gravesites at historic mission churches, one can see many American missionaries and their children laid to rest.

¹⁵ Briggs and Wing, *The Harvest and the Hope*, 76-101.

The Female Boarding School is vitally connected with the success of the missionary enterprises. Its object is to educate suitable companions for the native pastors and teachers, and for other educated Christian young men; that in every native community there may be at least one household illustrative of the fruits of Christian culture. The example of such families will act as leaven to promote the social and moral regeneration of the people, and will especially tend to the elevation of the female sex. The basis of a true Christian civilisation must be laid in the homes as well as the hearts of the people.¹⁶

Lucy Lindley initiated the Inanda Seminary in 1869 and since then it has produced many of South Africa's black female doctors, teachers and lawyers, including cabinet and deputy minister positions in the current South African government.¹⁷ The first principal sent by the Board, Mary Edwards (more affectionately known as "Mah Edwards"), arrived in November 1868 after a three month journey and served at the school for sixty years.¹⁸ Inanda continues to serve as the only school affiliated with the Congregational church after having survived the ravages of the Apartheid regime's Bantu Education policy that led to the closing of other mission schools across the country (Adams College and Tiger Kloof, to name just two). Adams, sent initially as a medical doctor from the United States and only became ordained in South Africa by the LMS, inspired the creation of the Amanzimtoti Institute (later named Adams College) in 1853 that produced for the African continent many of the most illustrious members of the Black *intelligentsia*.¹⁹ Thousands of students, dozens of schools, hundreds of Sunday Schools throughout Kwazulu and Natal fed capable and bright indigenous talent to these and other prominent institutions.

Congregational mission schools also produced outstanding political leaders, an enduring contribution that is still observed today. The founder of the ANC in 1912, Pixley Isaka ka Seme, was a product of the Inanda mission and Adams College. ka Seme's namesake, Pixley, was an American missionary who mentored him. The ANC elected John Dube, also a product of Inanda mission, as the first President of the ANC. At the turn of the century, Dube founded the Ohlange Institute, an industrial

¹⁶ KZNA, PAR, AMB, A608, D/1/90/97, no author cited. "The Female Boarding School in Foreign Missions", The American Board for Foreign Missions, Boston, 1866, 1.

¹⁷ Agnes Wood, *Shine Where You Are: A History of Inanda Seminary (1869-1969)* (Pietermaritzburg: Lovedale, 1972), 15.

¹⁸ Joanne Gamblee, *Ahead of Their Time: Nineteenth-Century Miami County Women* (Wooster: The Wooster Book Company, 2001), 173-214.

¹⁹ KZNA, PAR, AMB, A608, D/1/90/100, Albert LeRoy, "Amanzimtote Seminary", *The Higher Educational Institutions of the American Board* (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston, MA, 191-?), 81-4.

school. Luthuli hailed from Groutville, attended school and taught at Adams College, toured the United States in 1948 and became the President-General of the ANC. From the inspiration of Newton Adams, the first medical missionary, others such as James McCord and Alan Taylor enabled McCord Hospital to be the first medical facility to cater for the medical needs of the indigenous people.²⁰ McCord Hospital also went on to become the first institution in South Africa to train indigenous nurses (including one of Luthuli's daughters), many of whom had graduated from Inanda Seminary. McCord was the primary hospital whereby Luthuli received medical care during most of his adult life for his failing sight, high blood pressure-hypertension and strokes.

Aldin Grout and Groutville

Born on 09 September 1803 in Pelham, Massachusetts, Aldin Grout founded the Groutville (Umvoti) Mission station from where Luthuli hailed. Grout graduated from Andover Seminary in Boston, the same institution that bore the mission board he served.²¹ Andover Seminary inspired Grout to commit himself to pursue ministries overseas. Andover Seminary was a distinctly Congregationalist – or Independent – seminary and therefore it imbued its alumni with the polity and ethos of this branch of faith.²²

Following the death of his first wife and return to Africa with his second, Grout found the missiological environment significantly weakened by the political environment. The overthrow of Dingane in June 1839 and his death at the hands of the *Amaswazi* in March 1840 led to the installation of Mpande who was, for all intents and purposes, a vassal of the Voortrekkers, as king. A pattern of ambiguous dependency was first established with the American missionaries as on 06 August 1840

²⁰ All three served as medical doctors.

James McCord, *My Patients Were Zulus* (London: Frederick Muller, 1946).

²¹ Grout's colleague, George Champion, also graduated at Andover Seminary. Today, the seminary is known as Andover-Newton Seminary and is a United Church of Christ affiliated theological school.

²² Kotzé, *Letters of the American Missionaries*, 12.

Though Presbyterian, Lindley may also have been significantly influenced by Congregationalism. Lindley attended seminary at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia where he was inspired to serve overseas by a branch of the Society of Inquiry on the Subject of Missions to the Heathen. This Society was established at Andover Theological College in 1811 (Kotzé, 11).

Grout took an oath of loyalty to the Volksraad.²³ Passing the ruins of Ginani, Grout responded to an invitation from Mpande to visit. Initially, Mpande proved as agreeable as Dingane and gave permission for Grout to establish a mission station following Voortrekkers approval that was granted on 15 January 1841. Grout established a mission station at Empangeni and named it “Inkanyesi” – “Star”. Inkanyesi prospered under Grout due in part to the able assistance of indigenous leadership and his wife. A man named Mfungumfu Dube partnered with Grout, protected the missionary and interpreted the preached Gospel. Hundreds of students attended the mission school where Charlotte taught. Grout proved to be quite the agriculturalist, planting rye, wheat, barley, corn, pumpkins, melons, beans, sugar and sorghum. Grout became well known in the area as a ‘rainmaker’, a chief, and even a rival power against Mpande. Commentators have noted Grout’s dismissive attitude to Mpande’s power and imply that it was Grout’s arrogance that caused Mpande’s suspicion.²⁴ Grout overestimated Mpande’s trust of him and was naïve to how little the king would allow his Zulu subjects to be influenced by a missionary. In reality, Mpande’s interest and benevolence extended to Grout only so far as it was the royal kingdom that prospered. Grout fostered another kingdom, Christendom. This kingdom was at theological and cultural odds with the Zulu king. Tragically for Grout, as well as for any Christian mission in Zululand for some time, Mpande’s subjects paid for their dual allegiances with their lives. Grout’s followers believed his tutelage of them to be sanctioned by Mpande. However, as the two rivals became ever more suspicious and doubtful of each other’s intentions, the Zulus in Grout’s mission became trapped – afraid to demonstrate obeisance and afraid to show disrespect for Mpande. On 25 July 1842, Mpande launched a surprise attack on the mission ‘eating-up’ (killing) those close to Grout.²⁵ Mfungumfu warned Grout to abandon the mission station and flee.²⁶ The Grouts barely escaped with their lives.

²³ A. E. Cubbin, “Origins of Empangeni: Rev. Aldin Grout’s Mission Station Inkanyesi on the Mpangeni River May 1841 -25 July 1842”, in *Contree* 31, 1992, 26.

²⁴ A. Duminy and W. R. Guest, *Natal and Zululand* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal, 1989), 278.

²⁵ Smith, *The Life and Times of Daniel Lindley*, 220.

²⁶ Luthuli Museum, (LM), Groutville, Kwadukuza, Interview with Mr. Taylor Dube, by Mrs. A. Gibb (Curator of the Stanger Museum), at Nkukhwini, Groutville, 11 August 1983.

Mr. Taylor’s memory was not as good as Mrs. Gibb stated it was. While telling the history of his grandfather, Mfungumfu, seems to have confused the abandonment of Ginani due to Dingane that occurred when Grout was in the United States with the abandoning of Inkanyezi due to Mpande that occurred after Grout had returned. Also either Gibb or Taylor thought Cetshwayo succeeded Dingane whereas the order of succession was Shaka, Dingane, Mpande and Cetshwayo.

Mfungumfu Dube led Grout south across the Tugela River to eventually settle a station on the north side of the Umvoti River at Nkukhwini in 1842. A small church with a thatched roof was built with bricks that Grout taught his members to make. Mfungumfu proved to be a very able preacher. Grout respected his abilities to such an extent that he left Mfungumfu in-charge of the mission station and crossed the Umvoti River to establish another church on the south side. Two reasons for the move were that Nkukhwini's abundant sand was not suited to Grout's green thumb and the south side of the, then very large, Umvoti River, allowed more time for a get-away in case of attack by royal *impis* (military regiments) from the north. By 1847 the church was constituted and by 1849, Grout had built a church nine metres wide and 16 metres long, with a corner for a study.²⁷ Mfungumfu, considered a local chief, married and fathered Chief Nodhlela, who was the father of Chief Taylor Dube.

David Rood and his wife, Alzina, served as the minister of the Umvoti mission church with Grout from 1848 to 1850. Thereafter, Rood served the Ifafa mission station on the south coast. After Newton Adams' early death in September 1851, Rood replaced him serving at the Amanzimtoti mission from October 1851.²⁸ Here, in 1852 he founded a seminary for boys. This Amanzimtoti Institute came in time to be known as Adams College where Luthuli lived and worked as a teacher from 1921 to 1935.

The inland mission was destroyed by conflict involving Mzilikazi and settlers, the maritime mission was destroyed by conflict involving Dingane and settlers, and the Inkanyezi mission was destroyed by Mpande. It is understandable why Christian missionaries wished to establish some sense of stability in the region. Much of the Board's money and many of the missionaries' and Zulus' lives were at stake. Revisionist histories critical of the missiological union between missionaries and the colonial government often emphasise a common ideology and theology shared between the unholy union. Their critiques do so without considering the more practical realities of bankruptcy and death if the region was not stabilised enough to produce an environment conducive to establish infrastructure and to raise families, let alone propagate the Christian faith. The American missionaries did cooperate with and benefit from the colonial state. The government benefited from the pacifying and

²⁷ Booth, "Natal and Zululand" *Changing Frontiers*, de Gruchy, 82.

²⁸ Arthur Christofersen, *Adventuring with God: The Story of the American Board Mission in South Africa* (Durban: Lutheran Publishing House, 1967).

civilising influence of indigenous population by the missionaries and the missionaries benefited by the government's grants of large tracts of land and from the political stability offered by imperial rule. In time, the state's role became more and more oppressive to the indigenous population and became highly antagonistic to the efforts of missionaries.²⁹

After Natal became a British colony in 1843, large tracts of land were granted to Dutch settlers (Boers) for farming. Perhaps there was a feeling of obligation by the Crown to also dispense land to the American Board as Grout and other missionaries had settled in Natal and Zululand a year prior to the Boers. The Governor of the Cape, Sir George Gray, promised grants of land to the missionaries in Natal. In 1856, Law No. 5, Deed of Grant, was passed thus allowing the Lieutenant Governor to make land grants to the American Board.³⁰ Twelve self-contained mission stations of five hundred acres each were allocated at Umvoti (Groutville), Mapumulo, Inanda, Umsunduze, Itafamasi, Esidumbini, Table Mountain, Amanzimtoti (Adams), Imfume, Amahlongwa, Ifafa and Mtwalume.³¹ These mission stations still exist today under the auspices of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (a union of Congregational churches formed in 1967).³² Precisely because of its democratic, egalitarian and 'self-rule' polity, American Board mission stations emphasised as land policy the establishment of individual tenure for indigenous adherents.³³ Robert Houle explained that the American Board preached...

...a muscular, agrarian faith in which work and education played equally important roles alongside worship. To promote this ideal, they developed the 'village plan' under which *Amakholwa* lived in small

²⁹ The government became more offensive to missionaries, converts and the oppressed majority as a whole due to the enforcement of migrant labour and high taxes under Natal colonial rule as seen in the 1906 Bhambatha Rebellion and poll tax and under Nationalist Party rule as seen in the Sharpeville protest against Apartheid's pass laws.

KZNA, PAR, AMB, A608, Frederick Bridgman, "A Statement regarding the Obstructive Policy of Government toward Christian Work Among Natives", n.d.

³⁰ Booth, "Natal and Zululand", *Changing Frontiers*, de Gruchy, 83.

³¹ de Gruchy, Philpott and Ntseng, "The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa", 12.

³² The sizes of some glebe (church) lands are now smaller. For example, portions of land have been sold by the church in recent years at Inanda, Ifafa and Groutville. The UCCSA has sold some land because it can not protect it from squatters, to raise funds for local and wider church, to benefit other ministries, clinics and schools and to assist the government in land reform efforts.

³³ Khumalo, "Head Rings or Top Hats?", 35.

settlements on mission reserves and leased plots of land from the mission to farm and graze cattle.³⁴

The Congregational missiological emphasis on land tenure nurtured Luthuli's preoccupation and concern with the inadequacy of land. The enactment of the 1913 Land Act, No. 27, legally confined Africans to high density reserves and deprived them of the right to purchase land outside of those reserves. Luthuli's autobiography and speeches are peppered with censorious references to the 1913 Native Land Act. Luthuli's role as Chief in the latter half of the 1930s and throughout the 1940s enlightened him to the systemic injustice of land rights. Congregationalists' emphasis on land tenure created in time a class of educated commercial agriculturalists and entrepreneurs who quickly out-grew the small land holding they were allotted. Luthuli's chieftainship placed him as an arbiter between the state and the *Amakholwa* and between the *Amakholwa* themselves when the restrictive land laws caused much contestation within the mission reserve. Gordimer simply summarised the context Luthuli confronted on the mission reserve:

...[T]he Chief found that most of the things that made the people in his reserve unhappy were things that could not be put right by careful advice or a chief's wisdom. There was not enough land for the five thousand people in the reserve to grow their crops of sugar cane and vegetables and graze their cattle. As the sons of the families grew up, they could not buy or rent more land, because Africans were not allowed to own or farm outside the reserves in South Africa.³⁵

Congregationalism's emphasis on land tenure and Luthuli's struggle to resolve the symptoms of systemic injustice regarding land ownership awakened his political acumen thus catapulting him to political prominence.

Ntaba Luthuli

Inscribed by hand in the Luthuli family Bible is a record of the original progenitor of the clan, Madunjini Luthuli, a polygamist who "gave rise" to many sons,

³⁴ Robert Houle, "The American Mission Revivals and the Birth of Modern Zulu Evangelism", in *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present*, Benedict Carton, John Laband and Jabulani Sithole, eds. (Scottsville, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2008), 224. See further endnote 7, 235-6.

³⁵ Nadine Gordimer, "The Man Who Burned His Pass", in *Heroes of Our Time* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1961), 88.

the eldest of which was named Ntaba.³⁶ After their conversion and baptism by Aldin Grout, Ntaba and his wife, Titisi Mthethwa, and others such as Ngasha Mzoneli renounced polygamy and became *Amakholwa*. Ntaba and Titisi's conversions led to an American Board church being constituted on 01 May 1847, now called the Groutville Congregational Church.³⁷ Both Ntaba and Titisi became "zealous Christians" and began a line of Luthuli '*Kholwa* that is strong to this day'.³⁸ Ntaba became the second chief (*Inkosi*) to be appointed to serve the Umvoti Mission Reserve's *Abasemakholweni* (Converts) community – and the first of four Luthulis who served as Chief.³⁹ Not mentioned in Albert Luthuli's autobiography is the fact that Ntaba was the first teacher to serve in one of several schools organised in the area.⁴⁰ Nokukhanya, Luthuli's wife, remembered Ntaba spurned polygamy and abolished drinking throughout the village and was thus a strong influence on her husband's (himself a 'tee-totaler') life.⁴¹ In Luthuli's autobiography, one reads a story about Ntaba that provides a perfect glimpse of the political tensions that permeated the existence of American Board products, what Shula Marks referred to as an 'ambiguous dependency'.

One of the few anecdotes which I recall about [Ntaba] suggests that on relations between church and state he was basically sound. Being a deacon (elder) of the Groutville congregation, he was asked, at a time of war between the Zulus and the British, to pray for the success of the Queen's forces. The prayer stuck in Ntaba's throat. "O God", he prayed eventually, "protect the victims of whoever is the aggressor in this war"!⁴²

Titisi gave birth to four sons, Martin, John, Daniel and Henry.⁴³ Ntaba's cousin, Ngubane, became the Christian chief after Ntaba. Martin, Ntaba's son and Luthuli's

³⁶ LM, Luthuli Family Bible.

³⁷ Grout retired from the Umvoti ministry in 1870. Only after the turn of the century did the residents name the community and the church "Groutville".

³⁸ Peter Rule, Marilyn Aitken and Jenny van Dyk, *Nokukhanya: Mother of Light* (Braamfontein, The Grail, 1993), 24-5 and 46-7.

³⁹ Sampson, *The Treason Cage*, 186-7.

⁴⁰ Briggs and Wing, *The Harvest and the Hope*, 84.

⁴¹ Shirley Deane, *Black South Africans: A Who's Who (57 Profiles of Natal's Leading Blacks)* (Cape Town: Oxford University, 1978), 67.

⁴² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 5.

⁴³ Rule, Aitken and van Dyk, *Nokukhanya*, 47.
LM, Luthuli Family Bible.

uncle, became Chief after Ngubane.⁴⁴ John married a recent Christian convert, Nozililo Mtonya Gumede, whom Luthuli described as an “assiduous reader of the Bible”. Shortly thereafter, John, a well-trained teacher at the Groutville Congregational mission, sought to earn more income. John purchased oxen and a wagon and entered the transport business. Many from Groutville embarked upon commercial ventures as the only professions available for literate *Amakholwa* were teaching and the civil service that provided inadequate income to afford products to satisfy increasing western tastes. Robert Houle described Groutville as the “most fully realised pastoral village” saying:

By 1867, its 433 residents owned nearly 50 wagons, many more ploughs and carts, and hundreds of trained oxen to pull them. Transport-riding was a particularly popular and lucrative career for Groutville’s *kholwa* community, allowing them to tend their farms while using their unique position as Zulu Christians to do business in both the traditional and Western worlds of Natal, buying grain from Zulu neighbours and reselling it to the white community. The residents of Groutville poured these profits into the markers of their Christian identity – their 64 Western-style homes (including those made of brick), Victorian wardrobe, farming implements and small libraries.⁴⁵

John departed north with the British South Africa Army forces where he likely served logistically as well as linguistically. At some time, Mtonya ventured north to join him. The violence of the First Chimurenga Rebellion (Matebele) disrupted business.⁴⁶ On a chance encounter in Bulawayo, John met some Seventh Day Adventist missionaries who desired to establish a school for orphaned children. Sufficiently impressed with John’s teaching abilities, the missionaries requested him to

⁴⁴ Edward Callan stated that Ntaba’s son, Ngubane, followed Ntaba and preceded Martin as Chief of the Umvoti Mission. However, Ntaba’s sons are known as Martin, John, Daniel and Henry. Therefore, I conclude that it was Ntaba’s cousin, Ngubane, who became Chief before Ntaba’s son Martin. Although, it could be that Daniel or Henry’s middle name or Zulu name was ‘Ngubane’. Edward Callan, *Albert John Luthuli and the South African Race Conflict* (Kalamazoo, Western Michigan University, 1962), 17.

Khanya Ka Buthelezi incorrectly wrote for EtheKwini On-line that Luthuli succeeded Ngubane. Buthelezi indicated that Ngubane was Luthuli’s uncle.

Khanya Ka Buthelezi, “Chief Albert Luthuli”,

www.ethekwini.gov.za/durban/discover-durban/our-durban/history/famous_durbanites/politics/luthuli, accessed 15 March 2008.

⁴⁵ Houle, “The American Mission Revivals”, in *Zulu Identities*, Carton, Laband and Sithole, 224. See further endnote 9, 236.

⁴⁶ Sampson, *The Treason Cage*, 187.

take charge of the school at the Solusi mission. But first, John had to reform his ways. One source on the history of Solusi reported:

Unfortunately, [John] was a heavy drinker. During the rebellion he passed the idle hours away by drinking more and more heavily, nearly drinking himself to death. Finally, he sent for Dr. [A. S.] Carmichael, who treated him, and warned him of the dangers he faced unless he reformed.⁴⁷

Thereafter, John remained in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) as an evangelist, interpreter and teacher in Bulawayo for the Seventh Day Adventists. John proved to be a competent teacher despite the meagre resources.

What a school it was! No textbooks, no blackboards, no equipment. [John] told his students, "Your textbook is going to be your Bible. Your songbook is going to teach you English". They learned to write by marking in the sand.⁴⁸

John's leadership of the school was short-lived. The mission grieved when he unexpectedly died in mid-1898. What is known of John's sudden death is puzzling. After a grave illness involving a fever and a brief recuperation, the missionary Anderson...

...later learned that on the morning of the day [John] died, a friend brought him some ears of corn. Thinking they would taste good, [John] asked his wife to cook a half dozen ears, which he ate, and with fatal results.⁴⁹

John more than likely died of malaria. Heavy rains that year caused an epidemic of malaria that devastated Bulawayo. The Solusi mission, including most of the missionaries, perished from malaria during the same period. John left his wife widowed with the eldest son Alfred and their six month old son, Albert John Mvumbi

⁴⁷ Virgil Robinson, *The Solusi Story: Times of Peace, Times of Peril* (Washington, D.C., Review and Herald, 1979), 58.

In Robinson's text, Luthuli's father is referred to as 'John Ntaba'.

If John possessed a predisposition to alcohol dependency, it was passed on to Luthuli's sons who also suffered from it.

⁴⁸ Robinson, *The Solusi Story*, 59.

⁴⁹ Robinson, *The Solusi Story*, 65.

Luthuli.⁵⁰ Some commentaries and biographies of Luthuli indicate that he preferred the name 'Mvumbi', or 'Continuous Rain' to his English names.⁵¹ However, no evidence suggests this claim is correct.⁵²

In his autobiography, Luthuli notably begins his genealogy with Ntaba, the first Christian convert and not with Madunjini who is not mentioned. Luthuli thus articulated his genealogy through a theological lens, beginning with his grandfather and the first convert and a Christian chief (Ntaba), his grandmother and Christian convert (Titisi), his uncle and a Christian chief (Martin), his father and a Christian interpreter for missionaries (John Bunyan Madunjini), his mother and a Christian convert (Mtonya) and his brother (Alfred), like his father, a teacher. Luthuli indicated that he deeply honours his Christian progenitors as they were "zealous Christians" who were "the founders of the Luthuli Christian line".⁵³ Luthuli, like many who have commented upon his life, did not highlight the unique Congregational nature of the ancestral line. Perhaps he, also similar to many commentators, did not see his *particular* faith tradition as formative. However, as this study illuminates, Luthuli's Congregational faith tradition served as the primary current influencing his political being.

Martin Luthuli

Luthuli's upbringing was as saturated with Christianity as his ancestry. A cousin and domestic administrator of Martin's home, Charlotte Goba, was "a woman

⁵⁰ Albert was the third of three sons born of John and Mtonya. Alfred Nsusana, the first born son, died in 1941. Alfred, who was partially educated, did his best to succeed his father on behalf of the Seventh Day Adventists. The second son was Mpangwa who died at birth.

One source indicated Luthuli's birthday was 18 December 1898. Because Luthuli only "calculated" 1898 as the year he was born, he could not have known the day. Also, if John died in mid-1898 when Luthuli was six months old, then Luthuli could not have been born in December 1898. If the December date for Luthuli's birth is accurate, he must have been born in December 1897.

Daily News, "Albert Luthuli Honoured", by Charles Phahlane, 15 December 1999.

⁵¹ *Sunday Times*, "How to View Luthuli's Legacy: Luthuli's Too Big for Boxes", by Prof. Raymond Suttner, 06 July 2008. Found also at:

<http://www.thetimes.co.za/PrintEdition/Insight/Article.aspx?id=796624>, accessed 21 July 2008.

Beatrice Roberts, *Albert Luthuli* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 2006), 2.

This text is a brief regurgitation of Luthuli's autobiography for secondary education consumption.

Both the above texts likely obtained this information from Mary Benson.

Benson, *Chief Albert Lutuli of South Africa*, 3.

⁵² Jacob Zuma indicated in a 1999 speech to open the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital that later in his life, Luthuli's praise name was 'Madlanduna'.

Daily News, "Albert Luthuli Honoured", by Charles Phahlane, 15 December 1999.

⁵³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 5.

of deep piety [and] very prominent in church affairs” and a formative influence on Luthuli’s life.⁵⁴ Even nascent feminist concepts articulated later in Luthuli’s life when he affirmed that “Congress offices are open equally to men and women on merit” can be attributed to the *Amakholwa* community at Groutville.⁵⁵ Luthuli, somewhat quixotically, explained the nature of household chores exhibited that “the traditional Zulu distinction between male and female work tended to disappear”.⁵⁶ In his autobiography, Luthuli, perhaps idealistically, conveyed nascent conceptions of egalitarianism when he mentioned “Groutville has managed to throw up no elite cut off from the ordinary life of the village”.⁵⁷ In an unsophisticated manner, Luthuli described Jean and John Comaroff’s more studied articulation of a culture’s transmission of “salient signs and symbols” to “produce and reproduce the basis of...existence”.⁵⁸ Luthuli recalled, “All the time, unconsciously, I was busy absorbing the Christian ethos of home, and church congregation and the social ethos of the community”.⁵⁹ One author stated that this Christian ethos “was to govern his whole life”.⁶⁰ Morning, evening and mealtime prayers were regular rituals for the family that for Luthuli the passage of time failed to dissipate. In one recent tribute to Luthuli, Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela-Mandela reminisced about a time when Luthuli served as the ANC President-General:

I served dinner, but before they would eat Chief Luthuli would say a prayer. I will not mention which of the other men felt uncomfortable during this for they too had their beliefs.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 10.

Charlotte Goba was interviewed by Charlotte Owen and Peter Corbett in their 1993 documentary on Luthuli.

UCCSA Head Office Archives (UHOA), Brixton, Johannesburg, “Mayibuye Afrika: Chief Albert John Lutuli, His Story”, audio-visual documentary, produced by Charlotte Owen and Peter Corbett, funded by Anglo American Corporation of South Africa, Shell and Durban Arts Association, 1993.

⁵⁵ University of Witwatersrand (UW), William Cullins Library (WCL), records of the Federation of South African Women (FSAW), AD 1137, Ae4.3, Cb1.5.3, Message by Albert J. Luthuli, “Women and the Freedom Struggle”, on the Occasion of the Third Anniversary of the Mass Demonstration at Union Buildings – Pretoria on 09 August 1957 by South African Women Against the Issuing of Passes to African Women”, 09 August 1959, 4.

⁵⁶ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 11.

⁵⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 11.

⁵⁸ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1: 4-5.

⁵⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 11.

⁶⁰ Sampson, *The Treason Cage*, 187.

⁶¹ Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, “A Person of Immense Dignity and Noble Bearing” in *Umrabulo: Special Edition, A Tribute to Chief Albert Luthuli*, August 2007, 28.

No alcohol was consumed, a strong work ethic was prevalent, discipline was strict and education was encouraged. Luthuli acknowledged that while a youth in Groutville his Christianity was culturally, rather than theologically, instilled.

Luthuli grew up in two Congregationalist households, first that of his uncle, Martin (mid-1800s-1921), the Chief, and later that of his mother. As liaison between the old Zulu order and the new order dominated by Whites, Martin appears at various times in historian Jeff Guy's book *The View Across the River*.⁶² Like his nephew after him, Martin was raised and educated at the American Board Mission at Groutville. Seme, Dube and Martin all attended school at Adams. As a farmer and wagon maker, Martin suffered financially during an economic downturn in the 1880s and as a consequence offered his services to the desperate *Usuthu* (Zulu royalists) as they struggled to communicate appeals to the colonial government and the metropole. Martin served as a translator in English and *Isizulu*. At one time he served the interests of the rather questionable and selfish character, William Grant. Serving as a secretary and attaché of sorts for the *Usuthu* brought Martin much in contact with Bishopstowe, the mission station of the Anglican Bishop William Colenso. As a liaison, Martin was also brought into the powerful circles of Theophilus Shepstone and the colonial government he served. In the eyes of the Colenso family, this made Martin somewhat suspect.⁶³ During the 1880s, Martin acted as Dinizulu's secretary, the first of subsequent Groutville '*Kholwa* notables who served in this capacity (S. Nyongwana and Leonard Ncapayi).⁶⁴ As later did his nephew, Martin served the Congregational church by becoming the Chairperson of the Pastors' Conference, a second, and lower, leadership instrumentality within the Congregational church. At the turn of the century, Martin, with Saul Msane, John Dube, J. T. Gumede and others, founded the Natal Native Congress and became its Chairperson for some time. Like his nephew after him, Martin advocated for "increased representation for Africans as well as social changes, such as the introduction of private land tenure for

⁶² Jeff Guy, *The View Across the River: Harriette Colenso and the Zulu Struggle against Imperialism* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001), 127-8, 140-1, 145-6, 151, 159-61 and 255.

⁶³ Guy, *The View Across the River*, 127.

⁶⁴ Paul la Hausse de Lalouviere, *Restless Identities: Signatures of Nationalism, Zulu Ethnicity and History in the Lives of Petros Lamula (c. 1881-1948) and Lymon Maling (1889-c. 1936)* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 2000), 167.

Africans”.⁶⁵ In 1906, during the Bhambatha uprising, Martin used his moderating influence to help contain the extent of the secession of the ‘Ethiopian’ Zulu Congregational Church from the American Board.⁶⁶

As with Dube and Seme, we see in Martin a life of ambiguity. In 1908, Martin was the first chief to be elected democratically by the *Abasekholweni* community at Mvoti (the previous two having been appointed). At Groutville, concepts of democracy took root in Luthuli. Luthuli recalled that the selection of his uncle as Chief was an “occasion of a definite popular choice by the community”.⁶⁷ In the early 1910s, Martin, with other mission chiefs, argued for the complete territorial and racial separation subject to a more equitable distribution of land. Like so many *Amakholwa* leaders at the turn of the century, Martin’s life was one caught in the crosshairs of tradition and modernity. Two worlds pulling in opposite directions, one customary and indigenous and the other Christian and modern, vied for Martin’s allegiance.⁶⁸

Jordan Ngubane mentioned in one of his newspaper articles that Luthuli had an ‘uncle’ named “Ngazana Lutuli”.⁶⁹ Luthuli’s vocational interests also mirrored this uncle’s biography. *The African Yearly Register*, compiled by T. D. Skota, profiled Ngazana who was born in Groutville in 1874 and was a sub-editor and manager of *Ilanga lase Natal*.⁷⁰ Ngazana attended the local Groutville primary

⁶⁵ Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964*, “Political Profiles” (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1977), 4: 63.

⁶⁶ Bredekamp and Ross, “Albert Luthuli”, in *Missions and Christianity*, 196 and 207. Bredekamp and Ross cited:

Martin Legassick, “Frederick Bridgman, James Dexter Taylor and Ray Phillips, American Missionaries: The Urban Mission and Social Control”, unpublished paper, University of Warwick, n.d.

⁶⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 6.

⁶⁸ Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence: Class, Nationalism and the State in Twentieth Century Natal* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1986).

A. C. Jordan, *The Wrath of the Ancestors*, rev. ed. (Johannesburg: AD Donker, 2004).

⁶⁹ *Natal Mercury*, “African Profile: New Elected Spokesman of Zulu People of Natal”, by Jordan Ngubane, 01 January 1952.

This “uncle”, if Ngazana was an ‘uncle’ in the western sense, had to be the Zulu or middle name of Daniel or Henry.

⁷⁰ In an interview with Nokukhanya Luthuli, Tim Couzens and Annica van Gylswyk expressed an interest in knowing more about Ngazana. Nokukhanya confirmed that Ngazana is of the same line as Luthuli and that he lived in Groutville, yet she does not clarify whether he was one of his father’s brothers. According to Nokukhanya, he married twice. With his first wife he had three children, one of which, Lillian, used to be a teacher in Kwamashu at a school named after her father.

UNISA, UL, UA, DCAS, Albert Luthuli Files (ACC 135), taped interview with Nokukhanya Luthuli, 05 June 1978.

The information at UNISA stated that the interview was “regarding her husband”. However, the interview hardly ever mentioned her husband and focused on her memories of her early education. I

school, was educated at Adams College and graduated in 1897. Like Luthuli, Ngazana was a school master by profession (1888-1890) and taught at Adams College (1899-1915), departing only five years prior to Luthuli's arrival as a student. Ngazana also had a connection with Dube's Ohlange Institute, serving as its Secretary. The *Yearly Register* listed music as Ngazana's hobby and, like Luthuli, he was a choir master.⁷¹

The biographic 'associations' Luthuli had with an American Board educated and trained emerging black elite are extensive enough to assert that they constructed the core of his being. Other early 1960 ANC leaders despite being trained in mission schools did not possess the broad and multi-generational *Amakholwa* associations to the same extent and depth as Luthuli did. The rich similarities between Luthuli and those of American Board relations explain how faith bound Luthuli throughout his life. The degree to which Luthuli and his ancestors in faith attributed their identity to a legacy of partnership with white Christians in part describes why Luthuli was unable risk a 'race war' (as termed by Luthuli and Martin Luther King, Jr.) by parting with the ANC's idealistic, moderate and non-violent tactics. Others in ANC leadership positions who did not have deep ecclesiastic roots made, as Joe Matthews termed, the "psychological switch".⁷²

John Dube

From 1910-1914, Luthuli attended the local Congregational mission school, Aldinville Primary, in Groutville where "*Kholwa* elders promoted education nearly as fervently as communion".⁷³ Upon completion of standard four, Luthuli attended Ohlange Institute for two terms. John Dube (1871-1946) founded and led as Principal Ohlange Institute, located in Inanda. Despite the fact that Luthuli's short time at Ohlange made little impression on him, Luthuli seemed to be an enhanced simulacrum of Dube. For this reason, a brief narrative of Dube's life provides an enhanced understanding of Luthuli.

believe Couzens was interested in Herbert Dhlomo and other early twentieth century black African *petit bourgeois intelligentsia*.

⁷¹ T. D. Mweli Skota, *The African Yearly Register: Being an Illustrated National Biographical Dictionary (Who's Who) of Black Folks in Africa* (Johannesburg: R. L. Esson and Co., n.d.), 174.

⁷² Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 285.

⁷³ Houle, "The American Mission Revivals", in *Zulu Identities*, Carton, Laband and Sithole, 227.

In 1870, the American Board ordained three indigenous lay-leaders, thus ending the ministerial monopoly held by white missionaries. The third was James Dube, a convert of Daniel Lindley and co-founder of the Inanda mission church. James Dube had a son, John Langalibalele Dube (1871-1946), who in 1912 became the first President of the ANC.⁷⁴ Just as Luthuli, a nephew and grandson to chiefs, hailed from leadership stock, so too did Dube, a son of a prominent chief. The parallels between Luthuli and Dube continue. Dube attended Adams College where he came into the good graces of his mentor and sponsor William Wilcox, a missionary of the American Board. Dube financed a journey to the United States in 1887 with Wilcox and soon enrolled in the Oberlin Preparatory Academy before becoming a student at Oberlin College that had as its motto "Learning and Labour".⁷⁵ This first visit to the United States lasted until in 1892 when poor health forced him to return to Natal, not having formally obtained his degree at Oberlin. Upon his return, Dube, like Luthuli, taught at Adams College. He then travelled to the United States a second time to presumably raise money for an indigenous trade school he wished to found. In 1897, Dube took up residence in Brooklyn Heights, New York and was ordained into the Congregational ministry at the Lewis Avenue Church located in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area. Dube returned to South Africa and in August 1901, during the Anglo-Boer war, founded the Zulu Christian Industrial School (later in 1917 re-named Ohlange Institute) based on the philosophy of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute.⁷⁶ Also during the war, the colonial government detained Dube because he expressed the opinion that Blacks should have political control of the country. In 1901, Dube became minister of the Inanda mission until 1908 when he resigned from the pastorate following irreconcilable differences with white missionaries and settlers.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Actually, James Dube had more than one son. John had a brother named Charles who was an American-educated teacher and trader. Dube was elected President *in absentia*.

⁷⁵ Oberlin College provided a great deal of information about Dube and his time in the United States. Oberlin College, "John L. Dube: A Biographical Sketch". Found at: www.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/Dube/Dube.htm, accessed 27 January 2008.

⁷⁶ Luthuli once wrote, "In 'keeping the nigger down' the white man finds himself forced to remain in the ditch too, as Dr. Booker T. Washington so aptly observed". BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "The Many Victims of Apartheid", by Albert Luthuli, 15 November 1959.

⁷⁷ His resignation followed closely on the heels of the Bhambatha Uprising 1906 and upon his "being hauled before the Governor in 1906 and told to moderate his opinions" (251). The American Board was most likely sensitive to being labeled an 'Ethiopian' church as it permitted black ministers to lead congregations unsupervised by a White. Also the Ethiopian slogan "Africa for the Africans" could easily be confused with a history of advocating for indigenous rights, if not power. See further:

Never departing from his educational vocation, Dube made three additional trips to the United States to raise funds for Ohlange thus totalling five journeys there.⁷⁸ In 1912, the ANC elected Dube as its first President and elected another ordained Congregationalist, W. B. Rubusana, as one of its first Vice-Presidents.⁷⁹

Dube's life seemed a precursor for Luthuli's. The common American Board heritage, faith, polity, education and travel to the United States ensured that their life paths would be similar. Hofmeyr and Pillay identified three of Dube's defining characteristics:

Firstly, he was an educator and much energy went into making the Ohlange Institute viable. Secondly, he was a political leader and was among those who protested against the 1913 Native's Land Act. He accompanied the delegation to London in 1914 to protest to the British government. Thirdly, he sought peaceful coexistence between black and white South Africans, taking part in the Smuts Native Conferences (only for a few years before he left because it had no real power), the Joint Council Movement in the 1920s and church conferences. In 1926 he was part of the South African delegation to the international missionary conference at Le Zoute in Belgium.⁸⁰

All of the above three traits apply to Luthuli if one simply substitutes names and dates. Luthuli was an educator, a political leader and a Christian ambassador seeking racial reconciliation through peaceful means. Even their disappointments with the conservative nature of the church and the impotence of political forums run parallel. For Dube and Luthuli, education and hard work were the tools by which to achieve liberation. Violence and revolution were not a part of the recipe. While in Brooklyn, Dube attended Washington's lectures on topics such as "the dignity of labour" and the methods "to teach the Negroes to become moral, self-supporting and useful

Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of Kwazulu-Natal, 2005), 248-51.

Paul Thompson, *Bambatha at Mpanza: The Making of a Rebel* (South Africa: P. S. Thompson, 2004).

⁷⁸ 1887-92, 1897-1901, 1904/1905, 1910 and 1926/1927.

⁷⁹ Sechaba, "Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini: The Life and Times of W. B. Rubusana (1858-1936)", by Pallo Jordan, January 1984. Found at:

www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/rubusana.html, accessed 04 July 2008.

The LMS ordained Rubusana in 1884. Rubusana subsequently served as President of the South African Native Convention, a representative for Blacks and Coloureds in London in 1909 and as an elected seat holder in the Cape Provincial Council in 1914.

⁸⁰ Hofmeyr and Pillay, *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, 1: 185.

citizens".⁸¹ Luthuli emulated Dube. The same unique ecclesiastical polity that reared both ANC presidents fundamentally influenced their political views. Both served together on the Adams College Advisory Board that provided Africans a forum by which to affect mission education during the mid-1930s and later in 1940 both served on the more independent governing council of "Adams College Incorporated". Both Luthuli and Dube used Christian biblical teachings and a progressive concept of civilisation as the basis for their arguments. According to Dube, the Bible stated that a just government ruled from the consent of the governed. A central theme, the distinctly Congregational ethic, that fuses ecclesiastical and political polity as a means to forward the progressive nature of history was articulated by Dube as it was by Luthuli. Dube reasoned:

That the time has come when we should have some measure of legislative representation, some way of making our influence felt in the law-making powers. Our progress in the Gospel life and its accompanying civilisation demands it...⁸²

From this cursory biography of Dube, one is able to clearly see the parallel threads of optimism, theology and strategy that Congregationalism wove into Luthuli's life.

Dube was not re-elected as President of the ANC in 1917 as many progressive and impatient forces within the Congress viewed his leadership to be too conservative. Dube rejected violence, though this rejection did not cause him to lose the presidency.⁸³ Undoubtedly, a recurrent conflict within Congress leaders between the maintenance of conservative and gradualist ethics (commonly referred to as *hamba kahle* politics or "go easy" politics) engendered by American Board mission institutions and their colleagues' attraction to more assertive methods to establish equal rights in the land of their birth troubled Dube. This motif later troubled his younger cousin, Pixley Isaka ka Seme, and other Congress Presidents such as Xuma, Moroka and Luthuli. For the remainder of his career, Dube led the Natal branch of the ANC (to which Luthuli was elected in 1951). Dube served on the Native

⁸¹ William Marable, "African Nationalist: The Life of John Langalibalele Dube" (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Dissertation Services, 1976), 94.

⁸² Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912-1952* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971), 39.

⁸³ Hofmeyr and Pillay, *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, 1: 185.

Representative Council from 1936 until 1945 when he suffered a stroke. Dube died in 1946. After an election, Luthuli replaced him as a member of the NRC.

Pixley Isaka ka Seme

Another figure that helps to shed light on Luthuli's intellectual history is Pixley Isaka ka Seme (1881-1951). The Mount Hermon School File gives us a solid basis for establishing ka Seme as an ecclesiastical ancestor to Luthuli.⁸⁴ Like his older cousin Dube, ka Seme was born at the Inanda Mission Station. ka Seme studied for three years at Amanzimtoti Institution (later to be Adams Training School for Boys) learning, among other things, photography. ka Seme studied the equivalent of matric at the Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts and continued at Columbia University (after being denied an opportunity to study at Yale, his first choice). His American missionary mentor, S. C. Pixley, whose name Isaka adopted as a tribute during his studies, sponsored him and saw to his upkeep. John Dube and other benefactors also assisted a great deal along the way. At Colombia University, ka Seme delivered an award winning speech entitled "The Regeneration of Africa" that provides a prelude to the central themes we shall explore in this investigation: an optimistic understanding of history, an infusion of biblically based theology, and a gradualist's strategy.

Man knows his home now in a sense never known before. Many great and holy men have evinced a passion for the day you are now witnessing – their prophetic vision shot through many unborn centuries to this very hour. 'Men shall run to and fro', said Daniel, 'and knowledge shall increase upon the earth'. Oh, how true! See the triumph of genius today! Science has searched out the deep things of nature, surprised the secrets of the most distant stars...and has brought foreign nations to one civilised family. This all-powerful contact says even to the most backward race, you cannot remain where you are, you

⁸⁴ As with Luthuli, the historiography of Pixley Isaka ka Seme generically mentions his Christian heritage without acknowledging or providing further analysis of the unique Congregationalist 'brand' of Christianity that undoubtedly influenced him. For example, *Drum* magazine's entry for Seme documented that he "was born of a Christian family". The entry continued, "at home he was under the influence of his Christian parents and the guidance of American missionaries..." J. R. A. Bailey and Helen Lunn, eds., *Profiles of Africa* (Johannesburg: Drum, 1983), 101. Credit must be given to Tim Couzens who 'resurrected' the unfinished work of a deceased colleague (Richard Rive) who had done much research on Seme. ANC, "Discovering Seme", by Tim Couzens. Found at: www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/seme.html, 1-27, accessed on 01 April 2006.

cannot fall back, you must advance! A great century has come upon us! No race possessing the inherent capacity to survive can resist and remain unaffected by this influence of contact and intercourse, the backward with the advanced. This influence constitutes the very essence of efficient progress and of civilisation.⁸⁵

Some years later in 1912, subsequent to his return to South Africa, ka Seme organised a meeting in Bloemfontein of personalities from black communities all over South Africa to establish the South African Native National Congress, the initial name of the African National Congress. ka Seme gave the keynote address that proclaimed the Congress' purpose: "to devise ways and means of forming our national union for the purpose of creating national unity and defending our rights and privileges".⁸⁶ Couzens described ka Seme's leadership of the ANC from 1930-1937 as "conservative, lacklustre and autocratic" thus rendering the Congress to be in a state of "culpable inertia".⁸⁷

Early Education

In 1915, Luthuli attended Edendale College, near Pietermaritzburg. At Edendale he participated in his first act of civil disobedience. Luthuli and other students participated in a student strike and "stay-away" to protest what they judged to be unreasonable manual labour as a form of discipline. The mass action failed and for it, Luthuli received a public thrashing from his uncle. Luthuli notably remembered that at Edendale he was first exposed to white, or "European", teachers. Here Luthuli perhaps first began to develop, although subconsciously, his understanding of "a new example for the world", a synthesis of African and European cultures that could contribute to world civilisation.⁸⁸ While recounting his times at Edendale, Luthuli disputed the charge that mission schools were producing "Black Englishmen".⁸⁹ Luthuli opined that at Edendale "two cultures met, and both Africans

⁸⁵ Pixley Isaka ka Seme, "The Regeneration of Africa", *Journal of Royal African Society* 5, 1905-1906, 404-8.

⁸⁶ Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa*, 34.

⁸⁷ ANC, "Discovering Seme", by Tim Couzens, 8.

⁸⁸ Albert Luthuli, "Our Vision Is a Democratic Society", speech delivered to a meeting organised by the South African Congress of Democrats, Johannesburg, 1958. Found in: Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 126.

⁸⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 16.

and Europeans were affected by the meeting. Both profited, and both survived enriched".⁹⁰

At the conclusion of Edendale's two year 'lower' teacher's course, Luthuli accepted an appointment to teach as principal at a rural school at Blaauwbosch in the Natal Midlands. While serving at Blaauwbosch, Luthuli resided with a Methodist evangelist's family (Xaba) and became the protégé of the local Methodist minister, *Umfundisi* (Reverend) Mtembu. Luthuli attended this local church "because there was no local Congregational Church".⁹¹ Luthuli was confirmed in the Methodist church as the Methodists and Congregationalists shared ecumenical affinities. Shortly thereafter, Luthuli became a lay preacher under the mentorship of the old and benevolent minister. The fact that Luthuli worshipped and became a lay-leader in this local Methodist mission school has led many sources to incorrectly document that Luthuli was a Methodist. At Blaauwbosch, Luthuli first encountered Charles Loram, Natal's first Chief Inspectorate for Native Education and mentor of Z. K. Matthews (1933-1934 Phelps Stokes Bursary) at Yale University (Sterling Professor of Education from 1931).⁹² Luthuli so impressed Loram that he recommended Luthuli for a bursary to study for the Higher Teachers' Diploma at Adams College.⁹³

Adams College

In 1920, Luthuli continued his education at Adams College on a scholarship. After two years of study, he remained a worthy investment to his benefactors. When Loram again offered Luthuli a scholarship to attend Fort Hare University in the Eastern Cape, Luthuli declined. Demonstrating his sacrificial nature at a young age, Luthuli opted to earn a salary to provide for his aging mother. For a talented, conscientious and educated Black, Luthuli could pursue few vocations other than teaching for which he was in high demand following his graduation (the others being ministry, law and the civil service). Father Bernard Huss, Principal at St. Francis

⁹⁰ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 16.

⁹¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 16.

⁹² Loram was gradualistic and paternalistic concerning 'native' education and thus exerted a conservative influence on white South African liberals. Like Dube, Loram was strongly influenced by the Tuskegee Institute in the United States. Loram was a co-founder of the Institute of Race Relations and its first chairman in 1929.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge* 4: 60.

⁹³ LM, "Memorial Service to Pay Tribute to the Late Chief Albert Luthuli", speech by Dr. Mordecai Gumede, Groutville, 29 August 1982, 3.

College at Mariannhill in Natal offered Luthuli a post. Luthuli's doctor, friend, relative and executor, Mordecai Gumede recalled that such a job offer to a Protestant, let alone an adherent to the Congregational tradition, the ecclesiastical antithesis of Roman Catholicism, was unusual.⁹⁴ A. E. Le Roy, the ordained Principal of Adams who served from 1901 to 1926 also offered Luthuli a post to serve as a teacher at the "Normal College". Luthuli accepted. Luthuli's first responsibilities were to teach music as the College Choirmaster (his favourite) and *Isizulu*, the latter without textbooks. As Luthuli gained in experience and competence, School Organisation was added to his portfolio and eventually he was made Supervisor of Teachers-In-Training in all satellite schools.

Like its counterpart in Fort Hare from which many of Adams' graduates proceeded to earn university degrees, a great many prominent members of twentieth century southern Africa intelligentsia were educated and groomed to be leaders at the Adams institution. Much has been written about Adams College, as it was a point of contestation for and reconciliation of African and western theological, social and scientific values. Much of the literature on Adams is romantic and idealistic or, conversely, cynical and pejorative. Like Willem Saayman in *Christian Mission in South Africa*, I subscribe to a balanced perspective that nonetheless assumes an "entanglement" between mission and colonisation that was often embodied at mission institutions such as Adams College and thus does not "reduce complex historical dynamics...to the crude calculus of interest and intention, and colonialism itself to a caricature".⁹⁵ Romanticised histories, be they concerned with the missiological project in general or specifically with Adams College, neglect the shortcomings inherent within the synergy between Christian evangelisation and imperial colonisation and thus the subtle and/or naked racism included therein.⁹⁶ The Comaroffs' introduction to *Of Revelation and Revolution* stated that Monica Wilson (1969b and 1976) and Brooks (1974) portray missionaries as "well-intentioned

⁹⁴ LM, "Memorial Service to Pay Tribute to the Late Chief Albert Luthuli", Gumede, 29 August 1982, 4.

⁹⁵ Willem Saayman, *Christian Mission in South Africa: Political and Ecumenical* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1991), 22, 24, 34-5.
Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1: 7.

⁹⁶ Saayman, *Christian Mission in South Africa*, 27. Saayman cited: R. Ross, ed., *Racism and Colonialism: Essays on Ideology and Social Structure* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982), 2.

churchmen".⁹⁷ Their critics, such as Charles Villa-Vicencio who contested Wilson (1976),⁹⁸ see these apologies as "modern expressions of the same missionising culture".⁹⁹ Other earlier histories, often written by the missionaries or their sympathisers themselves, are essentially collective hagiographies. For example, a daughter of an American missionary wrote in *Stories of the Early American Missionaries in South Africa*:

We have only to contrast the ignorant, superstitious Zulu women of those days, full as they were of fear and terror of revengeful spirits, harshly treated as they were by their husbands and brothers, with the educated Zulu women of today who know God's Love and Mercy, and have experienced Christ's power to heal and to save. Think of the clean, helpful, sensible native women of to-day and the many native men living honest, worthy lives, and then we realise that Faith and Real Religion have purchased wonderful results.¹⁰⁰

On the opposite extreme, revisionist histories that emphasised the shortcomings of the religio-political interface are often highly anachronistic in their application of modern theological, anthropological and even scientific conceptions and unfairly judge nineteenth and twentieth century figures. In their review of histories critical of Christian evangelism, the Comaroffs mentioned Majeke (1952), Ayandele (1966), Zulu (1972) who "excoriate the missionary as an agent of imperialism".¹⁰¹ A more recent evaluation of the evangelical project by Greg Cuthbertson was particularly ruthless. Cuthbertson's theses that missionaries in South Africa "both used and defended violence" and were "natural associates of the Colonial government" were inaccurate in at least two respects.¹⁰² First, Cuthbertson unfairly deemed all southern African missionaries to be homogeneous when in reality even missionaries within the same mission board varied dramatically in their willingness to confront and/or acquiesce to the political context within which they operated. Furthermore,

⁹⁷ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1: 7.

⁹⁸ For example, Charles Villa-Vicencio considered Monica Wilson's paper "Conquerors or Servants of God?" to be an apologetic defense of the missionaries' project. Charles Villa-Vicencio, ed., *Theology and Violence: The South African Debate*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 1988), 18.

⁹⁹ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1: 7.

¹⁰⁰ Mary Tyler Gray, *Stories of the Early American Missionaries in South Africa* (Johannesburg: private print, 196-?), 70.

¹⁰¹ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 1: 7.

¹⁰² Greg Cuthbertson, "The English-Speaking Churches and Colonialism", in *Theology and Violence*, Villa-Vicencio, 15-6.

missioners from the British Isles sent by the LMS to the Tswana can not necessarily be sweepingly compared with North American missionaries sent by the American Board to the *Amazulu*; the latter were not as patriotically invested in imperial domination.¹⁰³ Second, Cuthbertson utilised an infinitely wide definition of ‘violence’, that is structural in nature and includes spiritual, economic, cultural and even technological violence (in the case of agriculture and industry) to almost demonise missionaries.¹⁰⁴ Ironically, it is these aspects of ‘civilisation’ and even Christianity that Cuthbertson declares as ‘violence’, that Luthuli, a traditional leader, boasted were increasingly appreciated by his people thus allowing them to participate as equals in the global community. Likewise, pejorative critiques of Adams College often fail to integrate within their analyses the “ambiguities of dependence” within which not only personalities but also *institutions* had to operate.¹⁰⁵ For example, Pawel Stempowski wrote that “Adams College fostered a false belief in the students”, “not giving [them] the means to achieve [their] aims”, “failed to put the African race on equal footing with the [W]hites”, “primarily served [its own] interests”, and *with* government’s policy of segregation “played an active role in establishing and maintaining the hegemonic control of the white population”.¹⁰⁶ If Adams College’s role or effect proved to be so malevolent, one questions why the Apartheid regime considered the school to be establishing and maintaining the opposite. The Apartheid government appropriated Adams in 1956 after the school’s vigorous implementation of futile measures to save it because the school did *not* play “an active role” in

¹⁰³ Nor can the dynamics of interaction between the LMS and the Tswana be seen as equivalent to those of the Scandinavian mission societies and the *Amazulu*.

¹⁰⁴ Cuthbertson, “The English-Speaking Churches and Colonialism”, in *Theology and Violence*, Villa-Vicencio, 15-6.

¹⁰⁵ Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence*, 1-14.

¹⁰⁶ Pawel Loius Stempowski, “The Making, Experiencing and Memorialising of Space: The Adams College Experience”, (Bachelor of Arts, Honours diss., Department of History, University of Natal, 1999), 34-5.

Stempowski’s assessments of Adams are valid. Nevertheless, the claims needed to be heavily qualified and counterbalanced, which they were not. For example, Stempowski declared that the likely innocuous erection of a fence at Adams “subconsciously prepared women for their domestic... [and] ...subservient” roles, 45. This assessment of missiology in Natal contradicted Luthuli’s autobiography that emphasised the de-genderising ethos of the Umvoti Mission. Stempowski failed to counterbalance her accusations with evidence that American Board “laboured strenuously to uplift the African woman whom they felt was living the deepest degradation”.

Myra Dinnerstein, “The American Board Mission to the Zulu, 1835-1900”, (Columbia University, Ph.D., Modern History, 1971), 96.

Stempowski failed to indicate that virtually all societies, African and western, were highly patriarchal. Adams College and mission stations in the nineteenth and twentieth century were not unique or particularly malevolent in their supposed missiological oppression of black women.

establishing white supremacy.¹⁰⁷ This investigation's purpose is not to undertake a study and evaluation of Adams College's historiography. Also, this investigation of Luthuli and the Christian missiological influences he most intimately received at Adams does not justify, apologise for, ameliorate or discredit the school and its aims and objectives. Suffice it to say, like Luthuli in his autobiography, this study acknowledges the contradictions between the values (idealistic and benevolent) articulated by American Board institutions, epitomised by Adams College, and the always imperfect, and on occasion contradictory, manner in which those ideals were implemented in practice.

The Amanzimtoti Institute, later named Adams College, became the 'flagship' school by which the American Board sought to train Congregational pastors and teachers. The American Board established the school in 1853 and closed it in 1956.¹⁰⁸ Adams' educational high standards attracted black students from all over southern Africa. At the peak of its pedagogical prowess, Adams College consisted of a high school, a theological school, a practicing school [for teachers' training], an industrial school, an agricultural school and a music school. According to the inaugural issue of its students' publication *Iso Lomuzi*, the school stood for "Sound Knowledge and Trained Ability, Modern Methods and Upright Character, a Clean Body and Spiritual Development".¹⁰⁹

The ethos of any institution primarily derives from the personalities who collectively compose it. In his autobiography, Luthuli named Z. K. Matthews (Head of the High School), K. R. Brueckner (Head of the Industrial School), F. de Villiers (teacher), Edgar Brookes (Principal) and C. W. Atkins (Head of the Teachers' Training College and Principal) as the foremost influential personalities at Adams. In his autobiography, Luthuli made clear that these particular Christian personalities profoundly influenced him spiritually and thus germinated his faith-based political philosophy.

A quotation by Brueckner that Luthuli held dear even thirty years later explains in part why throughout his life he seemed to perpetually view others

¹⁰⁷ UKZN, APC&SA, AP 370.968 GRA, 9812/5990, publication by George Grant, *The Liquidation of Adams College*, (for private circulation, n.d.).

¹⁰⁸ Due to the illness of a missionary who headed the school, the school closed from 1856 to 1865.

¹⁰⁹ UKZN, Killie Campbell Africana Library (KCAL), Campbell Collections (CC), *Iso Lomuzi: "Amanzimtoti's Students' Magazine"* 1, no. 1, September 1931, inside cover. This publication was in print from September 1931 to November 1956.

benevolently: “You must give a charitable interpretation to every man’s actions until you can prove that such an interpretation is unsound”.¹¹⁰ Even when struggling with one of his son’s disappointing “relapses”, Luthuli commented to a close friend, “I must confess, I am beginning to lose hope: not that I would scold him if I saw him – No”.¹¹¹ This advice agreed with Luthuli’s self-confessed character as not “a very aggressive person, and I tend when confronted by (for instance) the ill behaviour of others, to extenuate for them and look for the explanations for their conduct”.¹¹² As we shall see in this investigation, Luthuli *assumed* Loram’s positive intentions concerning his spadework for Bantu Education, refused to be hostile even to those who physically assaulted him, requested aid from liberals despite objections by Africanists, accepted assistance from the Communists despite objections by liberals and continued to his last days to refuse to support violence as a means by which to attain South African majority’s freedom. Luthuli’s ‘charitable interpretations’ gained him many allies until the liberation movements were banned and all means of protesting constitutional grievances were declared illegal.

Luthuli credited an Adams teacher, F. J. de Villiers, for sensitising him to the manner that Apartheid South Africa socialised Whites to hate people of colour. de Villiers, a (temporary) Afrikaner apostate who the Dutch Reformed Church denied ordaining due to his liberal views on race, “seemed closer to the Africans on the staff than did most white teachers...[and] associated with us more freely and more often than did his white fellows”.¹¹³ de Villiers for the first time explained to Luthuli that Afrikaners were “victims of their own past”, whose hatred for people of colour was acculturated into their society rather than inherent.¹¹⁴ This interpretation of white supremacy offered Luthuli a “real protection against hatred and bitterness” and was perhaps the source of his belief that after a good deal of soul-searching and repentance white supremacy would dissolve. Much to Luthuli’s dismay, de Villiers later became the Secretary for Bantu Education and complicit in the destruction of Adams College.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 24.

¹¹¹ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel #1, correspondence from Luthuli to Mary-Louise Hooper, 08 June 1956, 2.

¹¹² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 32.

¹¹³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 25.

¹¹⁴ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 25.

¹¹⁵ UKZN, APC, AP 370.968 GRA, 9812/5990, *The Liquidation of Adams College*, correspondence from Mr. F. J. de Villiers to the Secretary of Adams College, Inc., 12 July 1956, 45-7.

Luthuli's appraisal of Edgar Brookes reveals his instinct to view others charitably. Luthuli reminisced in his autobiography that Brookes made a deep impression on him because "he treated his religion with utter sincerity".¹¹⁶ Luthuli viewed Brookes as "one of South Africa's greatest champions of public and private sanity and morality".¹¹⁷ Luthuli held this view of Brookes in 1961, despite the fact that in 1935, while Luthuli still taught at Adams College, Brookes "put up an impassioned defence" for continued control by white missionaries against Loram who suggested a rapid devolvement of authority in to Africans.¹¹⁸ Right or wrong, Luthuli likely observed benevolent motivations in both.

C. W. Atkins typified for Luthuli the ethos of Adams that he held to be most valuable and enduring. About Atkins, Luthuli wrote:

He placed his emphasis on loving God and on service of the society in which one finds oneself, and he had no hesitation in involving us deeply in the affairs of the African communities which lay within reach of Adams. Possibly this was really the combined achievement of Adams, but Atkins remains in my memory as a symbol of it.¹¹⁹

These Christian lay men who encountered Luthuli at the Adams College mission station instilled within Luthuli the conviction that the...

...Christian faith was not a private affair without relevance to society. It was, rather, a belief which equipped us in a unique way to meet the challenges of our society...which had to be applied to the conditions of our lives...that inculcated, by example rather than precept, a specifically Christian mode of going about work in society.¹²⁰

When one reviews Luthuli's autobiography and contemplates the notable personalities that he highlighted as seminal influences, one finds (with the exceptions of *Umfundisi* Mtembu at Blaauwbosch and Matthews) that all were white liberal male lay-Christian educators. In light of the importance of these influences, Luthuli's

¹¹⁶ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 27.

¹¹⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 27.

¹¹⁸ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 193. Rich cited: AMB (American Board), BC 15.4, v. 47, Edgar Brookes to the Foreign Secretary, ABM, 02 January and 02 February 1935, encl., "Memorandum on Future Policy and Development, Amanzimtoti Institute", 21 January 1935.

The American Board eventually agreed to a compromise solution.

¹¹⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 27.

¹²⁰ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 27-8.

hesitancy and inability to advance into the realm of violence that he feared would quickly descend into a race war becomes understandable. When the question of violence arose within the Congress movement, Luthuli's cloud of saintly witnesses would have undoubtedly disapproved of any such measures. These mentors, these unseen witnesses, strategically paralysed Luthuli when others less influenced by white liberal Christians perceived the resort to violence to be the only viable option enabling them to exit the strategic cul-de-sac. Brookes, Atkins, de Villiers and Brueckner, despite the contradictions inherent within their liberal politics, influenced Luthuli to be 'bound by faith'. For Luthuli's mentors, this Christian mode could not countenance the use of violence in the South African context. Luthuli's missiological mentors, while influencing his relevancy to the ANC in 1952, influenced his irrelevancy in 1961 as it concerned being the strategic leader of the struggle for South Africa's liberation.

John Reuling

Though not mentioned in Luthuli's autobiography *Let My People Go*, the Congregationalist John Reuling (1906-1990) mentored and supported Luthuli longer than any other.¹²¹ One suspects that Luthuli did not mention Reuling in his autobiography so as to not jeopardise Reuling's ability to obtain travel visas needed for his regular visits to South Africa's American Board missions. Reuling served the American Board as the regional Secretary for Africa from 1946 to 1962. Roy Briggs and Joseph Wing figured Reuling to be the chief motivator who in 1960 advocated the dissolution of the Board mission in Natal and establishment of an indigenous church that would enable South African Congregationalists in Kwazulu and Natal to be fully autonomous and thus self-governing.¹²² In light of anti-colonial nationalism during the post-war period, Reuling and others resolved to streamline and thus make more efficient the Board's global endeavours. In order to achieve this missiological 'downsizing', the mission board encouraged and equipped missions to become

¹²¹ Luthuli intentionally did not mention many notable people in his autobiography. He wrote, "It may be noticed that names, which might have been expected in a book of this type, do not appear. The reason for this is not churlishness on my part, or a lack of honour where it is due". Luthuli continued to apologise by saying that the book is written for an international audience and therefore names of domestic (South African) importance required sacrificing.

¹²² Briggs and Wing, *The Harvest and the Hope*, 282.

sovereign. In order to enable the mission churches to be truly Congregational, autonomy was a prerequisite. Relinquishing foreign control of the church led the role of missionaries to be “working on the fringes as it were, serving by teaching or as in the case of church advisors, giving help when requested”.¹²³ In 1962, Reuling became the General Secretary (Executive) for the Board’s institutional successor, the United Church Board for World Mission (UCBWM), until his retirement in 1971.

Paul Rich judged Reuling to “have a rather romantic view of the white missionary’s role in South African society”.¹²⁴ Reuling had the somewhat naïve understanding that one American missionary with a ‘can do’ spirit could promote revolutionary economic and cultural change. Supporting aggressive social work in urban areas and subsequently agricultural development in rural areas, Reuling judged that the two albatrosses of African development were tradition and custom.¹²⁵ Reuling, in the spirit of Loram, was very much a ‘liberal’, and not without any vestiges of condescending paternalism.

Reuling’s history with southern African mission history is long, beginning in 1927 when he taught at Adams College with his wife Eleanor until 1941. Reuling served Adams in various capacities: Dean of Men, Head Teacher (Director) of the [Teachers’] Training College and the Vice-Principal.¹²⁶ For nine years (1927-1935), Luthuli and Reuling collaborated as colleagues at Adams College. Luthuli’s relationship with Reuling continued long after their time together at Adams. Luthuli and Reuling corresponded regularly until at least 02 September 1964. Reuling’s personal papers document with photos his relationship with Luthuli as early as 1932-1933 at Adams, Luthuli’s visit to the United States in 1948 (West Newton, Massachusetts) and even his attendance at Luthuli’s Nobel Peace Prize acceptance events in 1961. Reuling always remained very interested in Luthuli and news from Inanda Seminary’s Principal Lavinia Scott to Reuling frequently included a news bulletin about Luthuli.¹²⁷ Reuling used missionaries such as Scott as intermediaries

¹²³ UKZN, KCAL, CC, Inanda Seminary Papers (KCM), 52609, correspondence from Reuling to Luthuli, 06 January 1962.

¹²⁴ Rich, “Albert Luthuli”, in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 198.

¹²⁵ Rich, “Albert Luthuli”, in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 198.

¹²⁶ Yale University Library (YU), Divinity Library Special Papers (DLSP), Record Group No. 120, “Guide to the John and Eleanor Reuling Papers”, compiled by Martha Lund Smalley, 2003. Found at: <http://webtext.library.yale.edu/xml2html/divinity.120.con.html>, accessed 30 January 2008.

¹²⁷ Most correspondences update Reuling about Luthuli’s various bannings. Correspondences also focus on means by which bursaries may be extended to his daughters, Hilda and Albertinah, so as to support Luthuli but also to avoid politically offending the Apartheid state. Hilda and Albertinah both

between him and Luthuli. Reuling mentioned to Luthuli that the American Board expresses its appreciation to Howard Trumbull for serving as a conduit by sending and receiving telegrams to and from Luthuli.¹²⁸ The UCBWM did not wish the state to perceive that the church involved itself politically. Hence, the UCBWM avoided direct or frequent communication that could be intercepted between Luthuli and Reuling.

On 05 January 1962 during one of his many sojourns to South Africa, Reuling visited Luthuli at his home. Luthuli emphasised the need for the church to take a prophetic stance on issues related to the “corporate needs in the present situation of Africans”, lest the church be seen to be irrelevant to and abandoned by the young people.¹²⁹ The next day, Reuling wrote from Inanda Seminary a correspondence to Luthuli (presumably hand-delivered) summarising their discourse.¹³⁰ From their discussion, it is clear that despite having long since opted for party politics rather than ecclesial structures as a means toward liberating South Africa’s majority, Luthuli was, as late as 1962, still interested and involved in church dynamics, at least ‘behind the scenes’. Reuling and Luthuli’s enjoyed substantive discussions; both felt a special camaraderie as influential church laymen. In requesting Luthuli to “spark a movement, issue a call” and thus revive the church by strengthening clerical standards and training, Reuling seemed to have a grandiose conception of Luthuli’s evangelical potential.¹³¹ In what may be the last documented correspondence between the two,

needed and received bursaries from ecclesiastic sources. One can only speculate whether the church would have continued to make those bursaries available had Luthuli advocated Communism or the turn to violence.

UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, 52273, correspondences from Scott to Reuling, 20 February 1953; KCM 52311, Scott to Reuling, 15 July 1954; KCM 52419, Eleanor Reuling to Scott, 25 February 1958; KCM unknown, Scott to Reuling, 08 September 1960; KCM unknown, Reuling to Scott, 06 November 1961; KCM 52601, Scott to Reuling, 04 November 1961; KCM unknown, Scott to Reuling, 23 November 1961.

¹²⁸ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel #1, correspondence from Reuling to Luthuli, 02 September 1964.

Howard Trumbull was an American Board missionary with much business experience. Trumbull was appointed in 1961 to be a financial advisor for the Bantu Congregational Church (BCC). His task was to mentor a future Treasurer for the BCC and to structure the BCC financially. Following the formation of the UCCSA in 1967, Trumbull served as the Treasurer of the Natal Regional Council doing work related to the financial and legal administration of the glebe lands.

¹²⁹ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM 52609, correspondences from Reuling to Luthuli, 06 January 1962.

¹³⁰ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM 52609, correspondences from Reuling to Luthuli, 06 January 1962.

¹³¹ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM 52609, correspondence from Reuling to Luthuli, 06 January 1962.

Reuling related to Luthuli how an Adams College alumnus accepted the 1964 "Family of Man" award on Luthuli's behalf.¹³² Reuling wrote:

I'm personally glad for you that you have received this additional recognition and am personally grateful for the opportunity of having known you for so many years.¹³³

Luthuli and Reuling's lives intertwined in many spheres of life.

Commonalities brought Luthuli and Reuling together in the classroom, the sanctuary and the field. In addition to being the Vice-Principal of Adams and Director of the Teachers' Training College, Reuling also served as the school's "farm manager".¹³⁴ Luthuli supplemented his agricultural knowledge derived from his rural background shepherding mules in Vryheid and performing chores in Groutville by learning more scientific, modern and commercial methods of horticulture at Adams College.¹³⁵ Born in the predominantly rural state of Nebraska, Reuling, like Luthuli, possessed 'a green thumb'. Though Reuling served as the farm manager and Luthuli's senior, their relationship would have been reciprocal and egalitarian. Luthuli transferred information about indigenous methods and plants while Reuling transferred commercial skills. By becoming Chief, Luthuli returned to the land and founded and chaired the Zululand Bantu Cane Growers' Association. Bans forced Luthuli to retire from the campaign trail and to financially subsist on farming. Luthuli enjoyed spending time in his fields producing crops by the 'sweat of his brow'. Yes, Luthuli enjoyed being a teacher. Yes, Luthuli felt 'called', in the theological sense, to political life to advance the welfare of others. No doubt he felt fulfilled by both vocations. To his dying day, literally, Luthuli remained a farmer. In fact, the inquest form prepared by the Stanger police identified Luthuli as a "farmer".¹³⁶ Such an indication of his vocation may be, in part, a means by which the state could denigrate

¹³² The Protestant Council of New York and the Society for the Family of Man jointly sponsored the awkwardly titled award. The five thousand dollar prize acknowledged "outstanding contributions in Human Relations".

¹³³ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel I, correspondence to Luthuli from Reuling, 02 September 1964.

¹³⁴ Prof. Z. K. Matthews also held the post of Vice-Principal at Adams College under the leadership of Edgar Brookes who served as Principal from 1934 to 1945. From 1924 until 1932, Matthews headed the High School.

¹³⁵ From Rhodesia, in route to Groutville, Luthuli and his family stayed for a brief time in Vryheid.

¹³⁶ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel I, Luthuli Inquest Report, 19 September 1967.

and belittle Luthuli even in death, denying him the more prominent vocations of 'educator' or 'political leader'.

Reuling best typified Luthuli's white, liberal and lay Christian missiological mentors. Reuling embodied the American Board's considerable ecclesiastic, political and agricultural influence upon Luthuli. Reuling mentored Luthuli as an educator and lay-leader at Adams College, travelled to Oslo to be present with him as he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize and facilitated Luthuli's global political recognition.

Conclusion

Chapter one describes the foundation that linked Luthuli to Christianity and more specifically, Congregationalism. By studying Luthuli's faith-based influences, one is able to more accurately interpret his political thinking. For Luthuli, matters ethereal bore relevance to matters terrestrial. The former predicated the latter.

In his article "Mission, Church and State in Southern Africa", A. Hastings wrote that "...southern Africa has presented a *locus classicus* for the relationship of church, state and mission – the complex and diverse interaction of politics and religion within a missionary context".¹³⁷ Luthuli's autobiography began with this thesis as does this study. Since his formative years, a Christian and Congregational ethos infused his being. His grandfather, Ntaba, and uncle (Martin) were elected *Amakholwa* chiefs before him. His father, John, even served the wider church as a mission educator in Rhodesia where he died. Being raised, educated and churched in a mission environment that particularly instilled as much of a political as a theological ethos engendered in Luthuli a respect for egalitarianism, democracy, freedom, dissent, justice, education, hard work and socio-economic prosperity and an ecumenism that transcended all races and creeds.

Though those in the Christian faith and within the Congregational tradition frequently failed to practice what they preach, the ideals espoused were at times exhibited in some of its followers such as the founder and first President of the ANC. At Adams College, Luthuli learned from his missionary benefactors a will to fuse mind (education), body (politics) and spirit (theology) so one may reach one's God-given potential. By choosing politics to fulfil his unique calling, Luthuli did not

¹³⁷ A. Hastings, "Mission, Church and State in Southern Africa", *Mission Studies* 2, no. 1, 1985, 22.

compromise the tenets of his faith or thirty year associations, such as with John Reuling, who affirmed them. Luthuli's ecclesiastic roots ran much deeper than his political roots. Faith bound Luthuli while politics served its objectives.

Chapter Two

A Specifically Christian Mode of Going about Political Work¹

...the Christian faith was not a private affair without relevance to society. It was, rather, a belief which equipped us in a unique way to meet the challenges of our society. It was a belief that had to be applied to the conditions of our lives; and our many works – they ranged from Sunday School teaching to road building – became the meaningful outflow of Christian belief. -- Albert Luthuli²

Introduction

Chapter two's chronological and biographic narrative traces from 1926 to 1959 the engagements with people, organisations and campaigns that shaped Luthuli's political views. As a young teacher and chief, Luthuli first viewed the white paternalist government negatively and sought to organise and plan for holistic development. As a budding leader, Luthuli politically 'burned his fingers' with indigenous cooperatives, be they vocational, agricultural or political, as he realised the government manipulated ethnic nostalgia to thwart a progressive developmental path. Luthuli's American Board associations and overseas trips bolstered his emphasis on non-violent multiracial solidarity rather than violent African nationalist support. Luthuli's cooperation with Christian white liberals and the leadership positions they entrusted to him within multiracial ecclesiastic and civil society organisations convinced him that, with domestic mass action, international allies were the key to political liberation. Luthuli's defiant political stances, directly inspired by theological considerations, captured the attention of the ANC and propelled him to the heights of political leadership. The Defiance Campaign and the Treason Trial broadened Luthuli's appeal as many of all races recognised in him a potential Head of State. Luthuli's courting of moderate whites threatened to tip the scales of political power away from the National Party. Three bans quelled Luthuli's appeal and his political asphyxiation began.

¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 28.

"Adams taught me what Edendale did not, that I had to *do* something about being a Christian, and that something must identify with my neighbor, not disassociate me from him. Adams taught me more. It inculcated, by example rather than precept, a specifically Christian mode of going about work in a society, and I had frequent reason to be grateful for this later in life" (Luthuli's emphasis).

² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 27-8.

Natal African Teachers' Association and Zulu Language and Cultural Society

In 1928 while at Adams, the members of the Natal African Teachers' Association (also "Union") elected Luthuli as its Secretary under the presidency of his friend and Principal of Adams High School, Z. K. Matthews. The Association's programme centred on the "material" (attempting to enhance the salaries and conditions of [black] teachers), "educational" (attempting to motivate its members to keep abreast of the times through continuing education) and "social" (attempting to encourage educators to participate in sport, music, debates, games and social meetings "under the spell of a cup of tea or the cloud of the smoke of a pipe") needs of its constituency.³ In 1933, Luthuli became the Association's President.

In 1930, during his term as Secretary, Luthuli's wrote his earliest writing found in the archives. Luthuli wrote a letter of sympathy for another American Board product and Adams graduate, Allison Champion, President-General of the Industrial [and Commercial] Workers' Union (ICU).⁴ For his political antagonism, the government banned Champion from Durban, exiling him from that city for three years. The correspondence to members of the ICU conveyed at an early stage the degree to which Luthuli's belief in divine Providence tempered and consoled his discontent with the South African government. Luthuli wrote:

My President has desired me, on behalf of the Natal Native Teachers' Union to write and express sympathy with you gentlemen on the unfortunate step taken by the so[-]called [M]inister of Justice in banishing Mr. Champion, your General Secretary. Words really fail one to express adequately the feelings of regret and sorry (sic) that we have on this matter, and I am sure that in this, I am not only expressing the feelings of the [P]resident and myself, but of all the teachers who know Mr. Champion and the organisation that owes so much to his indefatigable efforts on its behalf. We trust that the God, the Father Almighty, will keep him safe in his banishment and allow him to return to his work to carry it out to an even more successful issue than before, may be much to the disgust (sic) and disappointment of the so[-]called Minister of Justice and we hope that with God's guidance you shall be able to get a worthy acting General Secretary who shall keep up the work, in the meantime, so ably carried on by Mr.

³ Albert Luthuli, "Natal Native Teachers' Union", *Natal Teachers' Journal* 12, no. 2, January 1933, 96-7.

⁴ An American Board missionary adopted Champion's father, hence the surname "Champion". "Mhlongo" was Champion's father's original surname.

Champion... We trust that God shall take care and provide in His own way for his family.⁵

The Association opposed and boycotted Charles Loram's policies that focused on manual labour. The emphasis Loram placed on the practical and utilitarian functions of education limited the educational horizons for people of colour.⁶ Luthuli recalled in his autobiography that Loram coined the phrase "develop along their own lines" and concluded that his policies served as an ideological platform for the National Party's Bantu Education that enforced inferior education on all people of colour.⁷ Nonetheless, Luthuli depicted Loram as altruistic, writing, "He had, I do not doubt, the best of intentions".⁸ Loram's efforts to inspire the American Board to "continue its policy of devolving power and responsibility to its African converts if it wished to 'retain its influence among the Africans, and carry on its leadership in improving race relations'" may have inspired Luthuli's sympathetic appraisal of Loram.⁹ Perhaps remembering that Loram arranged his bursary to Adams, Luthuli's characterisation of him was strikingly free of bitterness. Despite four years of "concentration on material matters" by the Association and little, if any, progress in that regard, Luthuli remained characteristically deferential when he praised the Department of Education in the October 1932 issue of the *Native Teachers' Journal*.¹⁰

Disillusioned by a lack of progress in improving teachers' material lot, Luthuli refocused his efforts by founding in 1935 an auxiliary of the Teachers' Association, the Zulu Language and Cultural Society. The Zulu king, Mshiyeni ka Dinizulu,

⁵ UNISA, UL, UA, DCAS, Collection: Allison W. George Champion (AWGC), Accession number 1, File Number 3.1.15, correspondence to The General Secretary of the I. C. U. *yase Natal* from the Hon. General Secretary of the Natal Native Teachers' Union, A. J. Lutuli, 30 September 1930. The archives do at times produce items of ironic humour. In a correspondence to Yengwa, Champion wrote, in what must be jest, "In 1930 I was exiled for three years. All this because I accepted the job of by all means work for the freedom of Afrika...Am I absolutely entitled to a Nobel Prize? I know now you have the means to get me one".

UNISA, UL, UA, DCAS, AWGC, 1, 19.7.1.1, correspondence to Yengwa from Champion, 03 September 1970.

⁶ Charles Loram, "A Plea for Handwork in Our Native School (Continued), *Native Teachers' Journal*, January 1921, 44-7.

⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 21.

⁸ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 20.

⁹ Cited by Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 193 and 206. Rich cited:

YU, DLSP, Charles Loram Papers, G7/5, "The Devolution of Responsibility and Authority on Native Leaders", (unpublished memo, n.d. 1937?), 5.

¹⁰ Albert Luthuli, "Natal Native Teachers' Union", *Natal Teachers' Journal* 12, no. 1, October 1932, 50-1.

served as one of the Society's patrons and John Dube served as its first President.¹¹ The fellow Congregationalist, Chair of the American Board's *Umkandlu* and Adams College Advisory Board member, Charles Mpanza, served as the Society's Secretary.¹²

Four years before its inception, Luthuli hoped that the Society "would undertake to secure the standardisation of necessary 'Zuluised' words" and "form new modes of expressing foreign [e.g., scientific] ideas".¹³ Luthuli also proposed that the Society initiate mass adult education.¹⁴ Rather than preserve Zulu culture in some early nineteenth century time capsule, Luthuli reminisced in his autobiography that the objective of the Society was to "preserve what is valuable in our heritage while discarding the inappropriate or outmoded".¹⁵

Luthuli's time with the Society was short-lived due to his call to serve as Chief in Groutville. His withdrawal prevented any significant direct involvement with the Society's development. As the Society matured, it deviated from Luthuli's original intentions. Shula Marks conveyed that the Society primarily sought to attain "state recognition of the scion of the Zulu royal house as Paramount, and added to it a concern for the preservation of Zulu tradition and custom".¹⁶ The Society, rather than agitate the government for quality mass education, benignly collected Zulu folklore and traditions for publication. Such beneficent activities attracted the support of the government, in particular the Chief Native Commissioner of Natal, H. C. Lugg.¹⁷ The government's largesse compromised the Society, detracting from its autonomy and caused many teachers to withdraw their membership from the early 1940s until it eventually collapsed in 1946.¹⁸

Luthuli conveyed in his autobiography his perception that, in addition to the grant in aid and office space accepted from the Native Affairs Department in

¹¹ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 194-5.

¹² Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 195, 192, and 197, respectively.

¹³ Luthuli, "Natal Native Teachers' Union", *Natal Teachers' Journal* 12, no. 2, January 1933, 98.

¹⁴ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 196 and 207. Rich cited: KZNA, Zulu Society Papers, NGA PMB, 1/2/2, Motions by Albert Luthuli to the Executive, Zulu Society (n.d., 1936?).

¹⁵ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 23.

¹⁶ Shula Marks, "Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity: Natal and the Politics of Zulu Ethnic Consciousness", in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, ed. Leroy Vail (Berkeley: Currey University of California, 1989), 217.

¹⁷ Marks, "Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity", in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, Vail, 225.

¹⁸ LM, "Memorial Service to Pay Tribute to the Late Chief Albert Luthuli", Gumede, 5.

Pietermaritzburg, the Society's involvement in the politics of the Zulu Royal House fostered its demise. The Society's co-opted relationship with the government led it to preserve a caricature of Zulu culture and stunted, if not prevented, an otherwise dynamic society's progressive contribution to the great stream of civilisation. Luthuli deduced this civilisation to be a synthesis of many cultures, including African.¹⁹ The Society's ethos proved too conservative, even retrograde. Thus the Zulu Christian intelligentsia viewed the Society to be a benign pawn of a malevolent government.²⁰

Luthuli's rejection of the government as a cooperative partner through his participation in the 1946 boycott of the Native Representative Council had its genesis in the inability of the Association and the Society to initiate any meaningful change. The lessons learned by Luthuli's experience with the Association and Society germinated his strategic shift to more assertive tactics against oppression as a leader of the ANC in the 1951 Defiance Campaign. The failures of the Association and the Society also later led to Luthuli's vociferous objection in 1959 and beyond of Africans participation in the bantustan framework.

Political and Ecclesiastic Chieftaincy

Luthuli explained in his autobiography that for many years "Groutville's domestic affairs were not going very well".²¹ The Groutville community wished to unseat Luthuli's unpopular predecessor, Josiah Mqwebu. Beginning in 1933, tribal elders with the support of the resident missionary approached Luthuli to contest Mqwebu's rule. The Groutville community actively sought Luthuli's candidacy. For two years, Luthuli repeatedly declined. By December 1935, Luthuli relented.²² Nevertheless, a process of vetting and approval of Luthuli as a candidate by the Board and the government likely preceded as a prerequisite his election.

The chieftainship of a mission community consisted of three roles: a traditional leader (*Inkosi*) accountable to the local community, a civil servant (Judge) accountable to the government and an un-ordained ecclesiarch (Deacon) accountable to the wider and local church. Therefore, any candidate for the chieftaincy must first

¹⁹ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "'Back-to-Tribalism' Is Unrealistic", by Albert Luthuli, 18 October 1959, 7.

²⁰ Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence*, 71.

²¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 41.

²² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 42.

be approved by the wider church and then the state before being elected by the local community.²³ The Code of Native Law required for juridical purposes that there be a chief of the Reserve.²⁴ Any candidate who passed through this gauntlet could then be presented to the community, to be ratified by democratic vote of what may potentially be the only approved candidate.

Luthuli and Mqwebu squared off in an election conducted by the Native Commissioner. Luthuli won 68 votes to 43.²⁵ Though the church likely participated with the state in engineering Luthuli's position as Chief, it can not be considered to have been in league with the government, but rather submissive and subservient to it. The American Board's likely 'pre-approval' of Luthuli's election as Chief to the Groutville community demonstrates that though Luthuli left Adams College, his role as Chief still placed him within the ambit of the Congregational family and thus accountable to it.

In January 1936, Luthuli began his duties as Chief. Criminal jurisdiction was "especially" conferred in Luthuli's appointment on 25 February 1936.²⁶ Luthuli argued that Groutville's small size, the lack of conflict due to an educated constituency and his encouragement to settle disputes amicably rather than through litigation severely limited his earning potential. Luthuli lamented his low salary as he struggled to properly educate many children. In a correspondence written to the Native Commissioner on 24 June 1940, Luthuli itemised his income for the year and

²³ Josiah Mqwebu's 'election' in the 1920s is a good case in point. The American Board forwarded recommendations, presumably based on the sentiments of the Groutville community, which the government evaluated. In 1920, the American Board recommended Laurence Mqwebu who the government rejected. The government's counter proposals were Philemon Mhlanumpofu Lutuli and Josiah Mqwebu. The process of electing a chief was often not as democratic as is often asserted. KZNA, AMB, PAR, A608, A/2/25, Office of the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC), No. 2691/17, correspondence from the Chief Native Commissioner to Rev. J. D. Taylor, 22 October 1920. KZNA, PAR, AMB, A608, A/2/25, CNC, No. 2691/17, correspondence from the Chief Native Commissioner to Rev. J. D. Taylor, 03 November 1920. KZNA, PAR, AMB, A608, A/2/25, CNC, No. 2691/17, correspondence from the Chief Native Commissioner to Rev. J. D. Taylor, 23 November 1920.

²⁴ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA, 78/46-47, Reel #1, "Regulations Made by the Minister of Native Affairs under the Authority of Sub-Sections (4) and (6) of Section Twenty of Act No. 38 of 1927, as amended".

UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA, 78/46-47, Reel #1, correspondence from the Secretary for Native Affairs to Albert Luthuli, 21 September 1950.

²⁵ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 196. See endnote 28, 207. Rich cited:

Native Affairs Department (NAD), 1/SGR/4/2/3/1.

Confusingly, Luthuli indicated that he ran against three other candidates.

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 42.

²⁶ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA, 78/46-47, Reel #1, Department of Native Affairs, declaration by the Chief Native Commissioner, Province of Natal, C. N. C. 57/138, 25 February 1936.

complained that his income of £150 a year as a teacher had plummeted to £45-50 per year as the Chief.²⁷ Luthuli's autobiography indicated the government therefore gave him an extra responsibility and, therefore, remuneration as a "liaison officer".²⁸

Though experience with the Teachers' Association and the Zulu Society no doubt provided Luthuli with some administrative and financial experience, it was not until he became Chief that he acquired the role of a public leader. Luthuli admitted that the position of Chief was not particularly glamorous nor did it predispose one to be a popular leader of a community or a country. In Luthuli's autobiography, one senses the disdain he initially had for his very reluctantly accepted position. Luthuli observed in his uncle's tenure as leader of the *Amakholwa* certain aspects of modern chieftaincy that repelled him. Luthuli described the chieftaincy as "taxing" and "petty", and likened the position to an "appointed boss-boy".²⁹

Whereas Adams engendered theoretical (theological, philosophical and pedagogical) epiphanies for Luthuli, the chieftaincy engendered practical ones. Away from the hermetically sealed comfort of what was very much an artificial community motivated by an ethereal benevolence and protected from terrestrial hardships, the chieftaincy allowed Luthuli to see "almost for the first time, the naked poverty of my people, the daily hurt to human beings".³⁰ Rather than being proud of and confident in his role as a traditional leader, Luthuli became disillusioned as he observed "evidences of an inadequate tribal structure breaking up under the pressures of modern conditions..."³¹ Luthuli soon perceived Groutville to be a microcosm of the greater context affecting all South Africans of colour. A lack of access to arable land, migrant labour, access to credit without land as a security and thus a deficiency of mechanical agro-chemical technology negatively affected Groutville. A short time after he became Chief, Luthuli realised that macro-conditions were limiting micro-possibilities. Pretoria's policies created a shortage of land, money, employment, educational and health services and thus stunted the people's achievements. In one of Luthuli's most memorable excerpts, he explained how if the chieftaincy was to constructively serve the people, it had to move from addressing the petty to the substantive.

²⁷ LM, correspondence from Luthuli to the Native Commission in Stanger, 24 June 1940.

²⁸ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 43.

²⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 42.

³⁰ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 44.

³¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 44.

...when I became Chief I was confronted as never before by the destitution of the housewife, the smashing of families because of economic pressures, and the inability of the old way of life to meet the contemporary onslaught. The destruction of our families is not the least of the crimes which white avarice has perpetrated against us. It continues, it increases, in spite of pleading voices raised against it.³²

Structural injustices that stymied communities had to be confronted as no measure of self-contained efforts would ameliorate the dire circumstances.

Agricultural, Civil Society and Ecumenical Advocacy Organisations

The 1936 Sugar Act limited the production of sugar in order to artificially raise its price. Quotas were imposed on the amount of sugar cane that could be processed and sold and these quotas were especially limiting for the independent, rural, black, cane grower. In response to this legislation, Luthuli, Gideon Mzoneli and two hundred others revived the Groutville Cane Growers' Association so as to make collective bargaining and advocacy more efficacious. The work was arduous, with the founders waking-up at three in the morning to cut the cane themselves during the harvest.³³ Two humble victories, the restoration of the ability for money to be advanced for production costs and the institution of 'globular' (comprehensive) quota amounting to the sum of individual quotas, led Luthuli to 'unionise' other growers on a regional scale. Luthuli then became a founding member and Chair of the Zululand Bantu Cane Growers' Association that made united representations to those who regulated the market at the expense of black farmers. Luthuli conceded that the Growers' Association won some small victories. For example, the Growers' Association achieved humble and still indirect representation to the Central Board via a 'non-European' Advisory Board in regards to sugar production, processing and marketing when the also indirect representation provided by the Native Affairs Department proved futile. Luthuli organised cane growers until 1949.

As with his involvement with the Teachers' Association, Luthuli seemed to have grown disillusioned with the Growers' Association's lack of achievement. In

³² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 48-9.

³³ LM, Myra Sibuyiselwe Sibisi (Mzoneli), "Sharing My Life Story", presented at the Luthuli Museum on the "International Day for Sharing Life Stories", 15 May 2008, 2.

whatever minor political dabbling Luthuli became involved, the participation, obstinacy and outright hostility of the government undermined substantive progress. Ultimately, the structural nature of the white supremacist society prevailed over the interests and advocacy efforts of Luthuli and others who sought to ameliorate the plight of black South Africans.³⁴ The Association also proved to be little match to the equivalent white commercial growers' associations.

Not all blame rested with the government or competition. Luthuli acceded that, to his disappointment, Africans proved "apathetic and uncooperative" and thus difficult to unite.³⁵ Luthuli claimed that due to their desperate state, the all too successful divide-and-rule tactics frequently employed by the Apartheid government balkanised the oppressed. This dynamic persisted throughout Luthuli's leadership of the ANC, particularly with the Africanists, and perhaps led him to seek close ties with more confident, assertive, established and cooperative white liberals. Nonetheless, as late as 1951, Luthuli continued to organise and support black cane growers, utilising his links with the American Board to procure for the cooperative a donated tractor and ploughs.³⁶ Luthuli continued to be the sole black representative on the Central Board until 1953.³⁷

Luthuli's participation in local politics transcended his agricultural advocacy efforts. Luthuli served on the Durban Joint Council of Europeans and Africans, a precursor to the South African Institute of Race Relations, organisations in which few if any of Luthuli's more militant colleagues held leadership positions. Cooperating with 'benevolent', white and primarily Christian members of various civil society organisations ingrained in Luthuli a conviction that racial integration was possible and universal suffrage inevitable. As a member of the Joint Council, Luthuli corresponded with Senator Brookes and other representatives of the 'natives' to advocate relief from onerous legislation in 1941. In one 08 April 1941 correspondence to Luthuli regarding opposition to the Burnside Amendment of the Motor Carrier Transportation Amendment Bill, the writer broke the news that "we had quite a long struggle over that and other parts of the bill, but we were

³⁴ The Oxford University Press engaged in hyperbole when it claims that upon accepting the chieftaincy Luthuli "saved the community's economy from collapse". Oxford University Press, "Luthuli, Albert John: Biography". Found at: www.answers.com/topic/albert-luthuli, accessed 05 January 2008.

³⁵ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 55 and 58.

³⁶ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 202.

³⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 58 and 56, respectively.

unsuccessful”.³⁸ The Act discriminated against non-Europeans involved in the transport industry from revocation of their certificates, to a ten fold increase in deposits for certificates, to restricting taxis to certain areas and times. The same correspondence to Luthuli stated, “Senator Brookes and I did all we could to protect non-European bus and taxi owners and had a strenuous struggle”.³⁹ Luthuli also served as a member of the South African Institute of Race Relations board.⁴⁰ The Institute provided a forum within which various churches and institutions met to discuss matters concerning race. The Institute presented findings to the government that it, more often than not, ignored.

During the early 1940s, Luthuli’s service to the church was not limited to the Congregational church. In response to the Durban City Corporation’s efforts to convert a rural and agricultural Anglican glebe (church property bequeathed to various missions by the British colonial government) in Umlazi into a residential dumping ground for African workers employed in Durban, Luthuli and others resurrected the Mission Reserve Association. The original objective of the Association was to lobby for individual rather than communal ownership of land. The revived Reserve Association dealt specifically with protecting the rights of the faith community within the Umlazi Mission station. Consultations occurred and Luthuli glimpsed moments when “half an ear” was given to the African voice.⁴¹ In the end, history rendered the Durban City Corporation’s scheme obsolete with the National Party’s win in the 1948 election. Again, within Luthuli’s advocacy efforts glimmers of optimism struggled to compete with exhausting, slow and disappointing results.

International Missionary Conference Trip, India

In his autobiography, Luthuli described his trip to Tambaram, near Madras, India as providing him with “wider sympathies and wider horizons”.⁴² Under the auspices of the Christian Council of South Africa, of which Luthuli was a delegate from Natal and subsequently an Executive Member, Luthuli attended the 1938

³⁸ UW, WCL, South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), AD843B (Part I), 100.4, correspondence to Luthuli from unknown, 08 April 1941.

³⁹ UW, WCL, SAIRR, AD843B (Part I), 100.4, correspondence to Luthuli from unknown, 08 April 1941.

⁴⁰ C. J. Beyers, ed., *Dictionary of South African Biography* (Durban: Butterworth & Co., 1981), 4: 330.

⁴¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 61.

⁴² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 70.

International Missionary Conference from 12–29 December to discuss the missiological role of indigenous churches. John Mott, Chairman of the Conference, indicated that the central theme of the meeting “would be the uplifting of the younger churches as a part of the historic universal Christian community”.⁴³ Allan Boesak noted that participants of the gathering discussed questions related to racism and colonialism.⁴⁴

After comparing inter-racial relations, mission education and poverty alleviation in South Africa to those within an ecumenical Christian gathering, Luthuli departed India as an “incisive critic” of South African Christianity.⁴⁵ Luthuli juxtaposed the dynamism of debate and the vigour by which the delegates discussed and manifested Christianity at the Madras conference with the apathy, diffidence to society and complicity of the Christian church in South Africa and even with those included in his delegation.

Notwithstanding being fully immersed in his responsibilities as Chief and his sober evaluation of the South African church following his trip to Madras, Luthuli still remained very active in the church. In one illuminating article entitled “Evangelism for Educated Bantu Youth”, printed in the publication *The South African Outlook* in October 1940, Luthuli warned that if the Church neglected to capture the passion and potential of the youth, “other agencies inimical to the realisation of the Kingdom will harness them”.⁴⁶ Luthuli specifically mentioned Communism and nationalism as competition. Luthuli’s evangelistic zeal for youth and the tone and intensity of his Christocentric beliefs can be read in the same article. Luthuli preached:

⁴³ International Missionary Council, *The World Mission of the Church: Findings and Recommendations of the International Missionary Council, Tambaram, Madras, India, 12-29 December 1938* (London: International Missionary Council, 1939), 7.

See also Volumes I-VII (The Authority of the Faith, The Growing Church, Evangelism, The Life of the Church, The Economic Basis of the Church, The Church and the State, Addresses and Other Records), (London: Oxford University, 1939). J. Merle Davis compiled volume five.

Also compiled by Davis: *The Economic and Social Environment of The Younger Churches: The Report of the Department of Social Economic Research of the International Missionary to the Tambaram Meeting 1938* (Edinburgh House: London, 1939).

⁴⁴ Allan Boesak, *Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition* (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1984), 135.

⁴⁵ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 69.

⁴⁶ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCP 5319, 276 LUT, 8832, “Evangelism for Educated Bantu Youth”, by Albert Luthuli, article reprinted from the October 1940 issue of *The South African Outlook* by Lovedale Press, 1.

Evangelism means the unreserved surrender of the individual to God through faith in Jesus Christ; and the deepening of the individual's faith and the regeneration of Society through saved souls. Our aim in evangelism should definitely be to confront the individual with Christ and to challenge him or her to decide for Christ. And we should not be satisfied until the individual unreservedly surrenders himself. Our efforts in evangelism mean little if we do not secure through Christ changed lives; consecrated lives; new men and women living a new way of life, as shown by our Lord and Master Jesus Christ when he said, "I am the Way, the Truth, the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me".⁴⁷

Despite the highly individualistic nature of spirituality, one does perceive the corporate importance of spirituality when Luthuli alluded to "the regeneration of society", the need for "social study groups", "the service of others", and interracial exchanges "for the sake of winning the whole of Africa for Christ".⁴⁸

Natal Missionary Conference

Prior to his involvement with the ANC, Luthuli sharpened his political and administrative acumen through his election to leadership positions within many ecclesiastic entities, one of them within the Natal Missionary Conference. The Conference sponsored ecumenical gatherings once a year. Most of the Conference's participants were white missionaries. The Conference formed policy regarding education, as missions controlled 95% of the schools for Africans and thus acted as grantees for the schools. The missionaries' function necessitated regular meetings with the Conference's Advisory Board and the Department of Education in Pietermaritzburg.

At its 1941 gathering in Durban, the Conference elected Luthuli as its Chairperson.⁴⁹ To elect a black, local, layperson to preside over a predominantly white, expatriate and clerical association elicited much criticism. Nonetheless, the election reinforced Luthuli's perennial optimism in the ultimate viability of multi-

⁴⁷ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCP 5319, 276 LUT, 8832, "Evangelism for Educated Bantu Youth", by Albert Luthuli, 2.

⁴⁸ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCP 5319, 276 LUT, 8832, "Evangelism for Educated Bantu Youth" by Albert Luthuli, 1-3.

⁴⁹ Interview with Gunner Helander in Västerås on 12 February 1996. Found in: Tor Sellström, ed., *Liberation in Southern Africa-Regional and Swedish Voices: Interviews from Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, the Frontline and Sweden*, 2nd ed. (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), 282.

racial cooperation. The affirmation confirmed for Luthuli the Church's overall beneficence and strengthened the bond between him and like-minded white liberal Christians. As his most recent trip to India shows and his future trip to the United States confirms, Luthuli's leadership roles conscientised him to the importance of international solidarity efforts and the key role the Christian activists could play in mobilising international public opinion in support of resistance to white supremacy.

Native Representative Council

In 1937 the Native Representative Council (NRC) was formed as a means by which to compensate and thus mollify the black population from the legislated loss of their limited franchise in the Cape Province as a result of the passage of the 'Hertzog Bills' in 1935. The government authorised Luthuli's first candidature for election as a member of the NRC in 1942.⁵⁰ Before his second candidacy for the NRC, Luthuli became a member of the ANC. Sources indicate that Luthuli became a member in 1944; however, Luthuli stated that his "formal inclusion in the ranks of the ANC" did not happen until 1945 or 1946.⁵¹

Luthuli's involvement with the NRC only began as a result of his success in a by-election held due to John Dube's 1945 stroke and death in 1946. Luthuli defeated the ANC veteran Selby Msimang by 231,926 votes to 99,118.⁵² The election win provided the first substantive aperture through which Luthuli entered national politics. Commenting on the NRC, Luthuli indicated in his autobiography:

I had no connection with this Council in its early years, save in my capacity as Chief. However, when the death of Dr. Dube brought about a by-election, I was voted into his place. I was interested, though not at all surprised, as I went about among the people before the election, to notice how deeply disillusioned they were by this time with the Council...⁵³

⁵⁰ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA, 78/46-47, Reel # 1, correspondence from the Magistrate/Native Commissioner to Luthuli regarding the "Ensuing Nomination and Election of Members of the Native Representative Council", 19 August 1942.

⁵¹ For example, Wikipedia's information on "Albert Lutuli" indicated Luthuli joined the ANC in 1944. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Lutuli, accessed 16 October 2008.

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 90.

⁵² Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 197.

⁵³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 94.

At this time, the liberation struggle's mood became more militant, particularly with the youth. Founded in December 1943 to pursue the intention of increasing the pace of reform, the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) placed much pressure on the NRC to permanently adjourn due to the fact that the Smuts and the National Party governments paid it no heed.⁵⁴ Luthuli continued:

... 'What is the use', they asked me, 'of your going to the NRC in Pretoria? They do nothing but talk. Where has this Council got us?' It was only true. For years now they had talked. Nobody listened. I was disillusioned myself, and could only reply. There are people beyond South Africa who sometimes hear what we say. All we can do is to shout to the world. All I can do is to help shout louder.⁵⁵

Luthuli served on the NRC for a very short time. As others had long begun to perceive, Luthuli realised that the NRC's efforts proved futile. In response to the government's brutal repression of a miners' strike, Luthuli stated his concurrence with his colleagues' decision to adjourn indefinitely at his very first meeting with the government serving as a NRC delegate. The Chairman of the Council, Major F. Rodseth, expressed the government's disappointment in Luthuli, the young novice representative, "because he was a trusted chief who had always been helped by the Department".⁵⁶ The representative group adjourned indefinitely more than once. Its own members rendered the NRC defunct until the new National Party government eventually scrapped the body in 1951. Luthuli and others effectively resigned from the NRC thus refusing to cooperate with the South African government or its representative frameworks. In a latter day counter defence from those who perceived his leadership of Kwazulu as collaborationist, Mangosuthu Buthelezi argued:

In my opinion, to say that we have "accepted" apartheid, by serving our people within the framework of the South African government policy would be as nonsensical as to say that when great African leaders like the late Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr. Z. K. Matthews and others, served their people within the frame work of the United Party government policy of segregation as members of the Native Representatives Council, that they did so because they "accepted" the

⁵⁴ South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa (1960-1970)* (Cape Town: Zebra, 2004), 1: 31.

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 95.

⁵⁵ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 94.

⁵⁶ UW, WCL, Champion, A922, A8, "History in the Making", 23 November 1952.

segregationists policies of the United Party government. Nothing could be further from the truth.⁵⁷

Buthlezi's justification misled his audience. Luthuli resigned and refused to participate in the body from the outset of his first participation in an NRC meeting.⁵⁸

American Board and North American Missionary Conference Trip, United States

Within the American Board, John Reuling sensed that Africans were neglected as it concerned opportunities for foreign representatives to travel to the United States and so provide to the American churches first-hand indigenous perspectives on the various mission fields. In 1948, a joint venture between the American Board and the North American Missionary Conference sponsored a speaking tour to the United States for Luthuli. The profound impact this had on Luthuli's political life is articulated in his autobiography when he reflected, "It may be that travelling has made me see South African issues more sharply, and in a different and larger perspective".⁵⁹

Lavinia Scott, the Principal of Inanda Seminary, and John Reuling of the American Board recommended Luthuli to represent the Natal mission. Newspaper articles provided varied reports concerning the purpose of Luthuli's speaking tour in the United States. One source indicated the tour's purpose was "to report on the work of the Mission in South Africa".⁶⁰ Others stated it was to "explain the issues of African economic development".⁶¹ Edgar Brookes considered Luthuli to be "the most outstanding church representative available" to make aware the problems of African development, particularly within rural economies, to the American Board.⁶² Another source indicated that the tour focused upon segregation, race problems and 'racial

⁵⁷ Excerpts taken from speeches of Chief Buthelezi held in the ANC archives in Lusaka. Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Edged Agenda* (London: Zed Books, 1988), 100, footnote 4.

Mzala very ably itemised other arguments criticising Buthelezi's participation as leader of the Kwazulu homeland and his use of Luthuli and Matthew's service on the NRC to validate it, 45-7.

"Mzala" was a pen name, used by the author, Jabulani Nxumalo.

⁵⁸ Scott Couper, "Chief Albert Luthuli and the Bantustan Question", *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 24 and 25, 2006-7, 240-68.

⁵⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 74.

⁶⁰ UW, WCL, Champion, A922, A8, "History in the Making", 23 November 1952, 1.

⁶¹ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 198-9.

⁶² UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, unknown, correspondence from John Reuling to Lavinia Scott, 20 February 1948.

reconciliation'. Shortly after his arrival in June 1948, Luthuli spoke to the American Board Prudential Committee at their Annual Meeting. In an address entitled "Africa Looks to American Christian Friends", Luthuli's sentiments primarily concentrated on racial issues, an important topic within Congregational circles at the time.⁶³ During the last week of June, Luthuli was a 'faculty member' delivering lectures at the Wilbraham Pilgrim Summer Fellowship Conference in Massachusetts. Luthuli focused on the communion of races in a letter he sent to the Dean of the Conference.

The fellowship at the Conference brought to me most forcefully and vividly, but most happily, the realism of our oneness in Christ, irrespective of our race or colour. Here I was, not only a stranger, but a man of another colour and nation, and yet I felt myself one with the fellowship. I have never sung with greater joy and understanding the song: "In Christ there is no East or West, In Him no South or North, [But] one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth". The climax of this feeling of oneness was reached when the whole fellowship of God was reached when the whole fellowship assembled at the Lord's Table (sic).⁶⁴

Two explanations exist for the divergent portfolios. The first is that Luthuli's stated purpose to deliver lectures on "African rural development", mission development and evangelisation (particularly as the latter two involve the youth) would have been more 'palatable' to the South African government upon which he was dependent for his visa rather than the intended purpose of speaking on race relations. A second explanation is simply that the American Board focused on 'African development' at summer camps while his time with the North American Missionary Society concentrated on 'race relations'.

Luthuli arrived and visited New York under the auspices of the American Board. Luthuli then spent most of his time speaking to youth at various camps during the summer. To the youth he displayed much of the oratorical prowess for which he would later become so famous by electrifying mass meetings with his message. Luthuli spoke at the Smithfield Congregational Christian Church in downtown

⁶³ American Congregational Association Archives (ACAA), Boston, Massachusetts, "A Firm Foundation", Annual Report of the American Board Commission for Foreign Missions Annual Report, "Monday Evening, June 21, 1948", 1948, 55.

E-mail correspondence from Margaret Bendroth, Librarian/Executive Director of the American Congregational Association (Boston, Massachusetts) to Scott Couper, 22 June 2006.

⁶⁴ ACAA, "From Chief Luthuli", *Missionary Herald*, December 1948, 32-3.

This article is a reprinting of a correspondence written to Rev. Frank Loper, the Dean of the Wilbraham Pilgrim Fellowship on 29 June 1948.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he related as well to people one-on-one as he did to large audiences. Twelve years later, an old acquaintance, Wilson Minton, vividly recalled a sentiment Luthuli expressed to him at the speaker's table. Luthuli remarked that he and Minton were "nearer to each other" than many of Luthuli's own people could be to Luthuli, although their "skins were of a different colour".⁶⁵ This comment puzzled Minton and he asked Luthuli what he meant. Luthuli responded that it was because they "both were Christians led by the same Spirit" while those of his people who were not yet Christians just could not understand his Christian attitude.⁶⁶ Many years later, Minton expressed to Luthuli:

In all my fifty years of ministry, I have had no greater compliment than that, and I cherish it to this day. And this has helped me suffer with you in these recent years when you have undergone so much for the sake of our Lord and His kingdom of which we are a part.⁶⁷

On 08 October 1948, Luthuli received a Junior Chamber of Commerce "Guest Speaker" award in Columbus, Ohio.⁶⁸ Here, at least, his speech concentrated on issues related to development in rural Africa and obliquely addressed racial issues. For example, Luthuli reminisced about the past and speculated about the future:

Ever since western civilisation made contact with Africa a New Africa has been coming into birth. Whether or not we shall have a noble, progressive Africa wherein love, brotherliness, righteousness shall abound, or a reactionary and sour Africa dominated by hate, anger, revenge and greed, shall depend a great deal on the policies and attitudes secular agencies, commerce, industries and governments adopt in regulating their relations with Africa.⁶⁹

From that point on, Luthuli served the North American Missionary Conference. Luthuli visited the major cities of Chicago in Illinois, Minneapolis in Minnesota and Boston in Massachusetts. While in Massachusetts, Luthuli and Matthews stayed at the West Newton home of John and Eleanor Reuling.

⁶⁵ LM, Charlotte Owen and Peter Corbett Papers (COPCP), correspondence from Wilson Minton to Luthuli, 27 October 1960.

⁶⁶ LM, COPCP, correspondence from Wilson Minton to Luthuli, 27 October 1960.

⁶⁷ LM, COPCP, correspondence from Wilson Minton to Luthuli, 27 October 1960.

⁶⁸ LM, The original certificate was found in a trunk belonging to Mrs. Nokukanya Luthuli, at the home of Mrs. Veli Luthuli (daughter-in-law to Luthuli), Nonthlevu, Groutville, Kwadukuza.

⁶⁹ LM, Charlotte Owen and Peter Corbett Papers (COPCP).

American Board Mission Archives, 15.4, v. 51, Albert Luthuli, "A New Africa: An Address Given to the Junior Chamber of Commerce", Columbus, Ohio, 08 October 1948.

Though it was not on his itinerary, Luthuli requested to visit the South in order to learn more about the conditions under which African-Americans lived. His stay was thus extended by three months and it included Washington, D.C. and Atlanta. While in the South, Luthuli had a relatively impromptu opportunity to speak at Howard University on behalf of the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Society in honour of Mohandas Gandhi who an assassin killed earlier in the year.⁷⁰ In his speech, Luthuli stated American 'Negroes' still suffer discrimination and thus revealed that he did not romanticise race relations in the United States. Luthuli expressed pride that it was in South Africa (1893-1914), when after being thrown from a first class section of a passenger train in Pietermaritzburg, Gandhi devoted himself to champion the cause of the emancipation of his people from discrimination. Luthuli mentioned that he had "no doubt that his efforts for his people inspired people such as Dr. John Dube and others to concern themselves with seeking human rights for their people".⁷¹ To his audience, Luthuli affirmed the "dignity of man and the efficacy of non-violence as an instrument of struggle in seeking freedom for oppressed people".⁷² In this speech, Luthuli prophetically articulated the strategies he would employ as the leader of the ANC. He praised Gandhi's example that taught "material wealth must be made subordinate to spiritual wealth that respects human personality".⁷³ Luthuli concluded his remarks at Howard College by pleading that "those so inspired by [Gandhi's] philosophy become his undaunted disciples".⁷⁴ Gandhi proved uncompromising in opposition to the use of violence as a means by which to liberate an oppressed people from colonialism and racism.

A review of Luthuli's sentiments on Gandhi's example illuminates the roots of Luthuli's torturous hesitancy to compromise on the use of violence. In July 1961, Luthuli wrestled with two voices: one of Gandhi's espousals of *Satyagraha* ('force that comes from truth, love and non-violence') and Mandela's persuasive arguments in favour of violence. Those who disagreed with the resort to violence were primarily

⁷⁰ Luthuli, obviously before arrival, incorrectly inferred that he would be speaking at the "Washington University". There is a "George Washington University" in Washington, D. C. Because Luthuli congratulated the University "for a century of meritorious service in the interest of [h]igher [e]ducation among the American Negroes", the event must have been held at Howard University.

⁷¹ LM, Albert Luthuli, "[Mahatma Gandhi] Memorial on the Occasion of the Centenary Celebrations of [Howard University], original handwritten draft provided to me by Christian "Boye" Luthuli, son of Albert Luthuli. The document was thereafter placed into the stewardship of the Luthuli Museum, Kwadukuza in November 2005, 3-4.

⁷² LM, Albert Luthuli, "[Mahatma Gandhi] Memorial", 3-4.

⁷³ LM, Albert Luthuli, "[Mahatma Gandhi] Memorial", 6.

⁷⁴ LM, Albert Luthuli, "[Mahatma Gandhi] Memorial", 7.

inspired by Gandhi's 1906, 1907 and 1913 *Satyagraha* campaigns. After the failure of the May 1961 boycott and the intransigent stance of the National Party government, Mandela argued to Luthuli and the other adherents of Gandhian tenets that non-violent tactics had been exhausted. "There came a point in our struggle when the brute force of the oppressor could no longer be countered through passive resistance alone".⁷⁵ As is briefly explored in chapter three, the ANC and Mandela referenced Gandhi when introducing ethical qualifications to legitimise the use of violence. For example, Mandela wrote:

Gandhi himself never ruled out violence absolutely and unreservedly. He conceded the necessity of arms in certain situations. He said, 'Where choice is set between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence...I prefer the use of arms in defence of honour rather than remain the vile witness of dishonour...' Violence and non-violence are not mutually exclusive; it is the predominance of the one or the other that labels a struggle.⁷⁶

The strong impact the visit to the United States made upon Luthuli is also confirmed by the testimony of Allison Champion. In an unpublished manuscript entitled "History in the Making", Champion insinuated that the ecclesiastically sponsored trips to India and the United States in part radicalised Luthuli, thus making him more malleable and susceptible to the influence of the more politically ambitious and impatient Youth League.⁷⁷ Champion's testimony points to a perspective that Luthuli's exposure abroad made him optimistic about the possibilities for South Africa's future in terms of racial integration.

Chief Luthuli was in America for nine months. When he came back he definitely changed his tone [according] to those who knew him closely. He had seen the operation of laws governing Black[s] and White[s] in

⁷⁵ Nelson Mandela, "Epilogue: Nelson Mandela Looks at Gandhi", in *A Man for All Seasons: Mohandas Gandhi*, ed. Johan Wassermann (Pretoria: Voortrekker Museum, n.d.), 2: 22.

⁷⁶ Mandela, "Epilogue", in *A Man for All Seasons*, Wassermann, 2: 22.

⁷⁷ UW, WCL, Champion, A922, A8, "History in the Making", 23 November 1952.

Champion was perhaps the only person who can be documented to paint an unfavorable portrayal of Luthuli. No doubt, Champion's prejudice against Luthuli was a reflection of his own vindictive and cantankerous nature and a consequence of Luthuli's dramatic and, for Champion, embarrassing electoral win for the President of the Natal branch of the ANC in November 1951. Champion portrayed Luthuli as a highly malleable and inexperienced leader. Champion also viewed Luthuli as a "politician in the Indian pocket". Champion resented the ANC Youth League's radical support of the 1949 resolution defying the Unjust Laws of the Union and their subsequent ousting of Dr. A. B. Xuma by Dr. J. S. Moroka and thus saw Luthuli as another pawn in the hands of the Youth League.

America. He had seen the limitless opportunities granted to the Negroes in the United States.⁷⁸

Upon his return to the United States, Luthuli actually confessed a state of melancholy to the missionary John Taylor stating, "Spiritually, I wish I would still be in the United States".⁷⁹ Luthuli continued:

I have never in my life felt so depressed as I am feeling since my return. The oppressive measures of our present Government are definitely hastening the day of extreme and aggressive African nationalism. Unfortunately, our own African leaders it appears are being swept off the path of reason to extremism.⁸⁰

Luthuli's depression must be recognised within the context that he returned in 1948, the same year that the National Party government took power in South Africa on a draconian Apartheid platform. Luthuli's own fears regarding "aggressive African nationalism" do come to fruition with the breakaway from the ANC of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in November 1958 and Nelson Mandela's launching of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*'s initiation of violent resistance in December 1961. Luthuli's reference to "our own African leaders being swept off the path of reason" pertained to the Youth League and their motivations to the ANC to adopt more radical tactics such as boycotts, strikes, non-cooperation with government institutions and civil disobedience (what would become the Programme of Action in 1949). In 1948, Luthuli had not yet been courted by the Natal Youth League (1951) or the national Youth League (1952) and thus did not yet subscribe to their more aggressive sentiments and tactics, let alone contemplate being their standard-bearer.

Luthuli's writings document the influence many American missionaries and lecturers and his extended ecclesiastic visit to the United States had on his political perspective decades into the future. Luthuli's education and overseas visit exposed him to, what was in the 1930s and 1940s and what is still to some degree, mythical conceptualisations and idealisations of the founding of the American nation and the seminal role of the Puritan Congregationalists in that founding. Luthuli extracted from his American Board education that which emphasised ecclesiastical and political

⁷⁸ UW, WCL, Champion, A922, A8, "History in the Making", 23 November 1952.

⁷⁹ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 199, endnote 57.

⁸⁰ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 200, endnote 57.

liberty. Luthuli frequently cited American political aphorisms when calling for the “consent of the governed”.⁸¹ He often quoted in his *Golden City Post* columns Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg address that was inspired by the Declaration of Independence.

We only want to see justice done and to see established a truly democratic Republic of South Africa that will provide a true government of the people, for the people and by the people.⁸²

In one editorial recognising American Independence Day (04 July), Luthuli pressed home his points regarding liberty for black South Africans.

The Fourth of July provides an occasion for such a call. On this date, in the year 1776, was born one of the most important documents in the political history of man – I refer to the American Declaration of Independence.⁸³

A staunch Puritan, John Adams co-authored the Declaration of Independence, served the United States as the first ambassador to the Netherlands, its first Vice-President and in 1797 was inaugurated as the second President of the United States. Adams thus provides one of many historical links between Congregationalism and the founding of the United States. Luthuli referred to Adams in the same 1961 ‘Fourth of July’ column.

The Founding Fathers felt themselves to be agents of a special mission, which John Adams, America’s second President, described as a “grand scheme and design in Providence for the illumination and emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth”...there is no escaping the fact that the American nation is oriented towards a noble goal, that it is bound to the grandest conception there is of human progress and freedom by reason of the heritage which it gave birth... We take hope in the fact that the Divine Ruler of our destinies has provided for this earth of ours such a nation as the American nation.⁸⁴

⁸¹ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Democracy and South Africa”, by Albert Luthuli, 30 July 1961.

⁸² BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “It’s Up to White South Africa”, by Albert Luthuli, 30 April 1961.

BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Our Way Is Right – We Must Keep On”, by Albert Luthuli, 25 March 1962. BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “What Would Mr. Mac Do in Our Position?”, by Albert Luthuli, 21 February 1960.

⁸³ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Declaration of Independence”, by Albert Luthuli, 16 July 1961.

⁸⁴ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Declaration of Independence”, by Albert Luthuli, 16 July 1961.

President of the Natal ANC

Luthuli credited the draconian Apartheid regime, inaugurated by the National Party election victory over Smuts in 1948, for awakening the “mass of Africans to political awareness” and goading them out of “resigned endurance” and feeble ‘cap-in-hand’ *hamba kahle* participation in governance.⁸⁵ Many of the early ANC Presidents were detached from the grassroots, reluctant to lose their privileged positions by antagonising the government and were more theoretically rather than practically inclined.⁸⁶ The 1944 formation of the Youth League (ANCYL), led by Anton Lembede and supported by Nelson Mandela, Joe Matthews (Z. K. Mathews’ son), Walter Sisulu, Ashby Mda, Masabalala Yengwa (later Natal Secretary under Luthuli), Wilson Conco (later Natal Chairperson under Luthuli) and Oliver Tambo (later Secretary-General under Luthuli) awakened the ANC. Initially Africanist and anti-Communist, the ANCYL gradually accepted political cooperation with other races and ideologies following the signing of 1949 pact of cooperation (Xuma-Dadoo-Naicker) with the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the 1950 banning of the Communist Party. Luthuli began attending ANC meetings in Durban in 1944 and soon joined. Shortly thereafter, ANC members in Natal elected Luthuli to the Executive Committee.⁸⁷

After hearing of the Youth League in Johannesburg, M. T. Moerene urged Yengwa and other young men to form a local Natal branch. Yengwa argued that the ANC “had to move from a political philosophy that was completely abstract to involvement in actual campaigns”.⁸⁸ The President-General of the ANC at that time, Xuma, deserves much credit for initially spearheading the ANC, particularly administratively. Yet, despite Xuma’s acceptance of the ANCYL’s emergence as a force with which to be reckoned, the ANCYL politically outgrew the conservative Xuma. Luthuli wrote:

⁸⁵ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 99.

⁸⁶ R. W. Johnson, *South Africa: The First Man, The Last Nation* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2004), 127-8.

⁸⁷ “The Legacy of Inkosi Albert Luthuli”, narrative brochure commemorating the launch of the Chief Albert Luthuli Legacy Project on 21 August 2004, 13.

⁸⁸ LM, Masabalala Yengwa Papers (MYP), “Masabalala Bonnie Yengwa”, author unknown, 23 January 1976, 1.

It was not long before [the Youth League] found that, while all were agreed about the work of organising the movement, Dr. Xuma hung back over the question of what to do with the organisation once it was there. Congress was urgent, Xuma was cautious.⁸⁹

The Youth League, often referred to throughout the ANC's history as the 'King Makers', then retired Xuma and elected James Moroka, a Wesleyan *Kholwa* who was at the time the leader of the All-African Convention (AAC), to be President-General of the ANC with Walter Sisulu as the Secretary-General. The ANC called Moroka to lead because he agreed to be compliant with the ANCYL's new militancy when Xuma refused. In December 1949, the ANC adopted the Programme of Action (PA), inspired by Kwame Nkrumah's example in Ghana, and "paved the way for a new era of organised action".⁹⁰ The fundamental change of policy and method was an uncompromising and final refusal to accept 'crumbs' such as segregation, apartheid, trusteeship or leadership from the 'rich [white] man's table'. The PA urged the adoption of more aggressive tactics such as mass civil disobedience, boycotts, strike action and non-cooperation as a radical replacement of what former ANCYL President A. P. Mda referred to as the "dilly-dallying and half-hearted" measures that were the standard course of old guard under Xuma.⁹¹ The PA spurred the ANC to demonstrate against the Group Areas Bill (June 1950), to strike in protest to the intention to remove Coloureds from the Western Cape's Common Electoral Roll (May 1951) and to launch the Defiance Campaign (June 1952). It was Champion's reluctance to involve the Natal ANC in the Defiance Campaign that caused another electoral coup over a politically obsolete leader by an increasingly impatient Youth League.⁹²

Following Dube's stroke, Champion succeeded him as President of the Natal ANC after electorally defeating another conservative leader, Rev. A. Mtimkulu.

⁸⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 101.

⁹⁰ SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 30.

⁹¹ SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 30.

⁹² The word 'coup' is controversial. The term is not used pejoratively. Rather, in this instance, and in my use of it throughout this investigation, the term 'coup' is intended to be understood in the same spirit that Mary Benson used the term in *The Struggle for a Birthright* when in the chapter entitled "The Youth Take Over", she wrote regarding the Moroka's election, "The Youth League's *coup* had come off".

Mary Benson, *The Struggle for a Birthright* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1966), 128.

Political pundits also recently used the term 'coup' to characterise a relatively constitutional ousting of a sitting ANC president, Thabo Mbeki.

Mail & Guardian, "Now for the Real Battle", by Nic Dawes, 26 September – 02 October 2008, 25. "In that sense Jacob Zuma's 'coup' was just that – a blow".

During the chaos of the meeting that elected him, Luthuli leapt to the stage to establish order and found himself unexpectedly appointed as acting chair of the meeting. Under Champion's leadership, Luthuli served on his executive. Dube led the ANC Natal region almost independently from the national ANC. Those who elected Champion most likely did so on a mandate to incorporate the ANC in Natal with the national organisation. This Champion did; however, not well enough.

Champion allowed his region to be completely ignorant of and thus lag behind the national ANC's preparation for the 1952 Defiance Campaign that sought to mobilise the disenfranchised for civil disobedience. Luthuli declined from further serving on the Natal executive as he felt that Champion's practice of appointing his own executive was undemocratic. The Natal Youth League led by Yengwa perceived in Luthuli a new brand of leadership, more radical and more democratic than Champion, and nominated him as President of the Natal ANC. H. Selby Msimang was also a nominee. Luthuli only agreed to run with Msimang's approval. Msimang bowed out. Luthuli won the election by a modest majority and succeeded Champion with Msimang as the Secretary on 30 May 1951.⁹³ In a draft article to *Ilanga Lase Natal*, Champion sulked:

Chief Luthuli came out openly to help and cooperate with the African Congress Youth League whose policy is that of non-collaboration as framed in the Programme of Action decided by the Conference of the Congress in Bloemfontein in 1949. I could not accept that policy with the nature of forces at my disposal. I was criticised severely and Chief Luthuli has led the attack successfully.⁹⁴

Champion was not the only one displeased with Luthuli's election. A month later on 14 June 1951, Walter Kamakobosi Dimibar wrote to the Secretary of the "Groutville Committee", Phinehas Mbambo, to express his dismay and opposition to Luthuli's election. Dimibar wrote:

After reading the news of Chief [Luthuli's] appointment as the President of the National Congress in Natal and at the same time he being the Chief of our Mission Reserve: I took his appointment as a

⁹³ *Natal Mercury*, "New Elected Spokesman of Zulu People of Natal", by Jordan Ngubane, 01 January 1952 (?).

Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 13. Pillay cited: *Drum*, February 1952.

⁹⁴ UW, WCL, Champion, A922, Da115, draft article submission to *Ilanga Lase Natal*, n.d.

wrong step he has undertaken even to contest the leadership of that organisation (sic). [The] African National Congress is a political organisation, an organisation that is full of strife, full of communistic ideas, full of boycotts against our Government...He cannot hold these two [posts.] [H]e has either to keep one and resign the other...⁹⁵

Dimibar then suggested that the Committee force Luthuli to resign as Chief so that another can be chosen as a replacement.⁹⁶

Defiance Campaign

As the newly elected President of the ANC in Natal, Luthuli had less than one month to prepare for the National Conference of the ANC scheduled to be held in Bloemfontein. Luthuli and the Natal Executive Committee were shocked to realise from preparatory materials that the ANC planned to initiate civil defiance. After having temporarily served as Chair of the National Conference, Luthuli confessed that the ANC Natal was unprepared for the Defiance Campaign (otherwise known as the Campaign for the Repeal of Discriminatory Legislation). The ANC members did not receive Luthuli's excuses with sympathy and he was even heckled as a "coward". The ANC in Natal agreed to make preparations for the Campaign, scheduled for the latter half of 1952, as best they could. Luthuli and his executive planned to enter the Campaign as soon as possible.

The history of the Defiance Campaign need not be elaborated upon in this investigation. Many other sources, including Luthuli's autobiography, more than adequately document the watershed impact the Campaign had on the ANC and the increasing antagonistic relationship the movements for liberation had with the National Party government.⁹⁷ Suffice it to say, Luthuli's entry into ANC leadership as President of the Natal region was a 'baptism by fire'.

⁹⁵ UNISA, UL, UA, DCAS, AWGC, Accession number 1, 19.7.2.1, Luthuli Memorial Foundation Correspondence, correspondence from W. Kamakobosi Dimibar to the Secretary of the Groutville Committee, Phinehas Mbambo, 14 June 1951.

⁹⁶ From Dr. 'Joe' Ndaba of Groutville, I learned Walter Kamakobosi Dimibar (alias Shumini) was originally a Dimba (possibly of Zanzibar extraction) and married a Coloured, both of which may explain the change of name. Walter was educated at Fort Hare, was very influential and popular. He found favour with the government of the day. He organised the various scattered spiritual African sects into one movement under him. He often flew to the United States. Walter flourished in Johannesburg, only coming very occasionally to see his relatives, sleeping one night and returning. He was not a Groutvillian by residence, though his parents raised him there.

⁹⁷ Benson, *The Struggle for a Birthright*, 140-56.

The 'warm-up' to the 26 June 1952 launch of the Campaign began from 06 April with numerous mass meetings and demonstrations throughout the country. Beginning in June, and in three stages gradually increasing in intensity, disciplined and trained volunteers of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) led by Mandela who was the 'National Volunteer-in-Chief' began to systematically disobey unjust and oppressive discriminatory laws thus inviting arrest, assault and penalty. The Campaign utilised strategies inspired by Gandhi and required a strict adherence to non-violence. Defying unjust laws demonstrated to the oppressed majority as well as to the oppressing minority the potential inability of the government to enforce and prosecute petty Apartheid restrictions if the masses acted in concert. Defying unjust laws also served to educate an often oblivious white electorate of the inhumanity of Apartheid laws and to thus engender moral outrage at its insensitivity and brutality to its *modus operandi*. Intended violations of the law, including the logistics of how, when, who and where were announced to the authorities. Demonstrators flouted prohibitions against the use of segregated railway stations, waiting rooms, public toilets, post offices and park benches in addition to the enforcement of pass regulations and curfews.

Though Natal had insufficient time to mobilise for defiance as did other regions such as the Transvaal and the Eastern Cape, by September it felt ready and participated to the extent that it was able. Benson related that Luthuli met with his executive in a small ANC office located in a busy Indian shopping centre and committed to cross the Rubicon. Luthuli impressed upon his lieutenants:

Look, we will be calling upon people to make very important demonstrations and unless we are sure of the road and prepared to travel along it ourselves, we have no right to call other people along it.⁹⁸

Together they pledged:

John Pampallis, *Foundations of the New South Africa* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1991), 195-9.

Dougie Oakes, ed., *Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story*, 2nd ed. (South Africa: Reader's Digest Association, 1992), 383-7.

⁹⁸ Benson, *The Struggle for a Birthright*, 144.

...we solemnly pledge that we shall exert all our moral, physical and financial effort to attain our objective – the freedom of the oppressed peoples of South Africa.⁹⁹

Yengwa described what happened next: “We all said that we were prepared and he said he too was prepared and he asked us to pray”.¹⁰⁰

The government dispersed mass meetings organised by the Indian and African Congresses. During the Campaign, the police arrested Luthuli for the first time though he did not break any laws. As a ‘Staff Officer’, Luthuli’s role required him to organise not invite arrest. By its climax in October, 2,354 resisters participated in the Campaign throughout the nation.¹⁰¹ While the Campaign did not persuade the government or the press of the legitimacy of its claims, the protests generated a massive swelling of the ANC’s ranks. Between 1951 and 1953, ANC branches increased around the country from 14 to 87 and its members in good standing from 7,000 to 100,000.¹⁰²

In October 1952, sporadic incidents of violence unexpectedly broke out in Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Kimberly and East London. A breakdown in the Campaign’s disciplined volunteers did not necessarily cause the violence. Many including Luthuli suspected that *agents provocateurs* perpetrated violence. Unsurprisingly, the white press and public linked any violence to the Campaign rather than to oppressive laws or to *agents provocateurs*. In response to the violence, Parliament passed the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Public Safety Act making the tactics of the Defiance Campaign illegal. Because the government enforced more curfews in some areas of the country, the Congresses’ leaders decided to terminate the Campaign in January 1953.

Theologically Informed Political Statement

In August 1952, Luthuli received a letter from the Lower Tugela Native Affairs Commissioner expressing disquiet that he encouraged people to oppose

⁹⁹ Benson, *The Struggle for a Birthright*, 145.

¹⁰⁰ Benson, *The Struggle for a Birthright*, 144.

¹⁰¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 110.

¹⁰² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 118.

Michael Morris and John Linnegar, eds., *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa* (Cape Town: Human Resources Research Council, 2004), 167.

government schemes. This was of concern to the government, for it employed Luthuli as a chief and authorised him to enforce minor laws within his jurisdiction. Though Luthuli claimed he “kept well within the regulations which governed chiefs”, the government had a legitimate case against Luthuli who as an adjudicator of the law simultaneously encouraged people to break some of them.¹⁰³ In September 1952, three weeks after his receipt and response to the first correspondence of concern, Pretoria summoned Luthuli.¹⁰⁴

In Pretoria, Luthuli the Secretary for Native Affairs, W. W. M. Eiselen, the Deputy Secretary and the Chief Native Commissioner for Natal met with Luthuli. After some preliminary questions, Eiselen confronted Luthuli with the central grievance that his involvement in the Defiance Campaign contradicted his role as Chief. Luthuli defended himself against the charge by making a subtle distinction that the encouragement of breaking certain unjust laws was, by its nature, *political* and not *criminal*. Second, Luthuli declared that he did not conflate his responsibilities as Chief and leader in the Congress. Third, Luthuli argued that the government recognised Congress to be a legal entity and, as long as it was legal, no conflict of interest existed. Luthuli reasoned:

It was to allow these wider associations, intended to promote the common national interests of the people as against purely local interests, that the government, in making rules governing chiefs, did not debar them from joining political associations, so long as those associations had not been declared “by the Minister to be subversive of or prejudicial to constituted Government”. The African National Congress, its non-violent Passive Resistance Campaign, may be of nuisance value to the government, but it is not subversive, since it does not seek to overthrow the form and machinery of the state, but only urges the inclusion of all sections of the community in a partnership in the government of the country on the basis of equality.¹⁰⁵

The government must have heard this last qualification with a collective wry smile for the ANC intended to subvert the government. The creation of a government on the

¹⁰³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 113.

¹⁰⁴ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 16.

¹⁰⁵ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, Reel #2, CAMP MF 2914, Press statement “The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross”, 15 November 1952, 4.

Reel I, CAMP MF 2914, handwritten draft statement “The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross”, 14 November 1952.

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 232-6.

basis of racial equality would *for the National Party regime* require an overthrow of the form and machinery of the state. Before he walked out of Eiselen's door, Luthuli decided not to comply with the government's ultimatum. After his meeting with Eiselen, Luthuli addressed thousands in Pretoria at the Transvaal's ANC Annual Conference.

In October 1952, Luthuli received a letter requesting him to reply to the contradiction still perceived by the Department. Luthuli replied the same: he saw no contradiction and had no intention of resigning from either the chieftaincy or the ANC.¹⁰⁶ Mangosuthu Buthelezi correctly perceived that "Luthuli didn't make any choice; he let the government do what it does".¹⁰⁷ From October, Luthuli fathomed fully what was to come. In November 1952, the government deposed Luthuli. Horace Rall, the former magistrate who served the order deposing Luthuli, indicated in an interview he neglected his duties (an accusation that Luthuli denied in his autobiography) and served "two masters in opposition" with one another.¹⁰⁸ Thereafter, on 14 November 1952 Luthuli drafted the personal and biblical statement, "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross" that the ANC and the Natal Indian Congress jointly released.

Though political, documentary evidence proves the statement had a theological, biblical and homiletic genesis. Six days earlier on 09 November 1952, Luthuli delivered a sermon entitled "Christian Life: A Constant Venture" at Adams College.¹⁰⁹ A comparison of the two texts reveals that Luthuli drafted his famous "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross" statement by quoting substantive portions of his sermon preached a week earlier. The political perspective emanated directly from the theological perspective. This thesis enables one to understand better the existential, theological and political dynamics at work during the later half of 1961 when the option for violence was irrevocably made by the ANC. Obedience to what

¹⁰⁶ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, unknown, from Scott to Reuling, date unknown (December 1952), 3.

¹⁰⁷ UHOA, Interview with Mangosuthu Buthelezi, "Mayibuye Afrika", 1993.

¹⁰⁸ UHOA, Interview with Horace Rall, "Mayibuye Afrika", 1993.

Hall's claim may have legitimacy. One of Scott's regular reports to Reuling stated: "We have heard that there had been some criticism of Chief Luthuli at Groutville – perhaps for being away too much, or perhaps just for not favouring certain people. I do not know. But we have heard recently that the people there say they do not want any other chief and that if they can't have him they will get along with none".

UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, unknown, from Scott to Reuling, date unknown (December 1952), 3.

¹⁰⁹ UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP (BCZA 78/46-7), CAMP MF 2914, microfilm, Reel #2, Albert Luthuli, "Christian Life: A Constant Venture", outline of a sermon preached at Adams College during the morning worship service, Sunday, 09 November 1952, handwritten, 1-21.

Luthuli considered to be the fundamental tenets of his faith was of primary importance and not ultimately, the success or failure of any given tactic or strategy. Luthuli's faith background taught him that success, that is liberation, was inevitable, that liberation was not in doubt, precisely because God would ensure that 'might is not right'.

Luthuli's sermon explained to his faith community the position he was about to take by providing a biblical rationale for the political statement he would soon issue. Both texts speak the same message, with varied emphases, to different audiences. To his faith-based audience, Luthuli's sermon served as a theological apology for opting for secular politics rather than ecclesiastic chieftaincy as a means by which to serve the people. To his political audience, represented by the ANC and the Natal Indian Congress, Luthuli grounded his political statement with a theological foundation using a title and the same concluding sentence: "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross". To his political followers, Luthuli communicated that the basis and impetus for politics is a calling from God to serve others. To his faith-based community, Luthuli communicated that through politics, one implements faith. To his ecclesiastic followers, Luthuli proclaimed that one is a mere extension of the other; neither of the two can be separated.

In his sermon and, to a lesser extent in his political statement, Luthuli utilised the hermeneutic lens of typological re-enactment to convey his justification. When selecting a title for his autobiography, "Let My People Go", Luthuli again would mesh politics and faith using the hermeneutic lens of typological re-enactment. The "Road to Freedom" statement proclaimed that in forfeiting the chieftainship, Luthuli conceived himself to be moving to a larger "adventure" within the spiritual realm rather than from the spiritual to the secular realm. Despite choosing the political realm to struggle for the rights of the South African majority, Luthuli was first and foremost motivated by theological, and more specifically, biblical considerations.¹¹⁰ Because Luthuli was the Chief of the *Abasemakholweni* tribe, his chieftaincy was as theologically premised by the church as it was politically premised by the people of Groutville and the government.

The fact that the ANC and the Natal Indian Congress jointly issued Luthuli's statement is not insignificant, for it points to his democratic nature. When questioned

¹¹⁰ Scott Couper, "Luthuli and Kairos", *The Nonconformist* (Johannesburg: The Congregational, 2007), 32-43.

by his antagonists in Pretoria, Luthuli stressed that he answered personally, and not on behalf of the ANC, as he did not have its specific mandate to respond as the collective. Valuing the importance of the collective, Luthuli did not issue “The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross” in his personal capacity, but rather under the auspices of the wider liberation movement. These small acts point to a general pattern where, in his capacity as leader, Luthuli did not act unilaterally or against the majority. This pattern suggests why in large part after 1962, Luthuli eventually remained quiet about his opposition to the initiation of violence as a means by which to prosecute the struggle for liberation.

Those who seek to evince Luthuli’s support for the turn to violence ubiquitously quote a portion of the statement “The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross”. For example, in his statement, Luthuli rhetorically asked:

...who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately at a closed and barred door? What have been the fruits of my many years of moderation?¹¹¹

Those justifying the ANC’s turn to violence anachronistically cite Luthuli’s exasperated question to convey the opposite of what he advocated. Though the statement explicitly advocated non-violence, portions of it are incorrectly interpreted to justify violence. Though the title of the statement proclaimed sacrifice and suffering as a means to political salvation, portions of it have been manipulated to justify a different ‘road’.

The Groutville community expressed some initial discontent about Luthuli’s deposing by indicating a refusal to elect a new Chief. Though in the end, Luthuli was disappointed with the community’s reluctant resignation. They did nothing about the injustice. From then on, Luthuli indicated that he remained “as aloof as possible” from tribal affairs, seeing chiefs as emasculated by their white supremacist paymasters.¹¹² Though sympathetic with their vulnerability, Luthuli was again disillusioned by his own constituency’s lack of political activism and perceived more political promise for political liberation through the advocacy of a more influential white, Christian and liberal elite.

¹¹¹ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, Reel #2, CAMP MF 2914, Press statement “The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross”, 15 November 1952, 2.

¹¹² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 117 and 42.

President-General of ANC

The ANC suffered a large disappointment towards the conclusion of the Defiance Campaign when Moroka abdicated his leadership role by attaining separate legal counsel from his co-accused, apparently on the pretext that the Communist lawyers on the defence team represented the accused. Moroka also took the witness stand to mitigate any legal punishment. Luthuli reflected:

The leader of Congress dissociated himself from his fellow-accused, he appeared unready to go the whole way in defiance, and he asked Whites to shield him from the consequences of white laws, and from the consequences of his own stand.¹¹³

Moroka's defence proved to be a humiliating gesture by the leader of a liberation movement.

Luthuli provided a dramatic contrast by defying the government's ultimatum to choose the ANC or his livelihood as a chief and in his dramatic public statement following his dismissal joined his "people in the new spirit that moves them today, the spirit that revolts openly and boldly against injustice and expresses itself in a determined and non-violent manner".¹¹⁴ Such a declaration guaranteed Luthuli the soon to be vacant position of President-General of the ANC. In December 1952, a month after his dismissal, ANC members elected Luthuli to a three year term as the leader of the oldest and largest continental liberation movement. The membership elected Mandela as Luthuli's deputy. Ironically, the future Pan-Africanist leader Potlako Leballo formally nominated Luthuli.¹¹⁵ This nomination from Leballo underscored the links between the ANCYL, the Programme of Action, the Defiance Campaign and the perception that Luthuli was a bold and fearless leader who was ready to sacrifice all for the liberation of the oppressed in South Africa. When Robert Sobukwe seceded from the ANC to lead the Pan-African Congress in November 1958, Luthuli's influence began to weaken in ANC circles. Mandela's launch of *MK*

¹¹³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 122.

¹¹⁴ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, Reel II, CAMP MF 2914, Press statement "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross", 15 November 1952, 2.

¹¹⁵ Oxford University Press, "Luthuli, Albert John: Biography".

Found at: www.answers.com/topic/albert-luthuli, accessed 05 January 2008, 4.

in December 1961, effectively a second secession from Luthuli's leadership and strategy, all but completely diluted Luthuli's influence.

Moroka's ousting and Luthuli's election brought to view the ANCYL's tendency to support a candidate who would implement its programme, use that leader to the fullest extent possible and when the flexibility of the leader had been exhausted, politely, procedurally and democratically dispense with that leader. This recurring motif occurred with Xuma, Moroka and Champion (and to some extent with other *Amakholwa* before the advent of the ANCYL, e.g., Dube and Seme).¹¹⁶ This study underscores the same dynamic continued with Luthuli. The ANC membership elected Luthuli as the Natal and national President on the shoulders of an impatient ANCYL.

In mid-1961 when those same younger, more militant and increasingly impatient elements of the ANC opted to use violence, the ANC was an illegal entity and could not meet, hold elections or conduct an electoral coup to topple Luthuli as had been done with his predecessors. Instead, a non-orchestrated coup occurred, conveniently facilitated by two historical realities that were as prominent as the ANC's radically new strategic tact toward violence: Oliver Tambo's leadership of the exiled ANC abroad and Luthuli's banning that confined him in Groutville. Just as Luthuli evaluated Moroka to be "unenthusiastic and cautious" in December 1952, so in December 1961 the ANC under Mandela evaluated Luthuli to be unenthusiastic and cautious regarding the use of violence to oppose white supremacy.¹¹⁷

Wider Church Relations

Despite Luthuli's disappointment in the Church's efficacy as an agent of political change, he continued to serve as a leader in various church-based institutions until he was "forced to resign his post[s] as a result of Government Policy".¹¹⁸ Luthuli served on the Advisory Board of McCord Hospital Board, the Advisory Board of Inanda Seminary and the Governing Council of Adams College.¹¹⁹ Luthuli also

¹¹⁶ One could argue that the same political dynamic still continues today. Many political commentators claim that the ANCYL's support of Jacob Zuma reversed his political obituary, allowing him to be elected in December 2007 as the 'populist', militant and left-leaning President of the ANC after defeating the more intellectual, conservative and neo-liberal leadership of Thabo Mbeki.

¹¹⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 122.

¹¹⁸ McCord Hospital Archives (MHA), correspondence from C. D. Orchard, Medical Superintendent of McCord Zulu Hospital, to Mrs. A. Luthuli, 31 July 1967.

¹¹⁹ MHA, correspondence from C. D. Orchard to Mrs. A. Luthuli, 31 July 1967.

served as the Chairperson of the South African Board of the Congregationalist Church of South Africa (Bantu Congregational Church) and Vice-Chair (Executive) to the Christian Council of South Africa, the predecessor of the South African Council of Churches.¹²⁰

In January 1953 on the heels of his electoral victory, Luthuli attended the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Christian Council in the Cape and pressed a reluctant audience to issue a "non-evasive" statement on the Defiance Campaign.¹²¹ In his autobiography, Luthuli expressed the same sentiments he shared with the Executive Committee of the Christian Council in 1953:

The charge of evasion, where it is made against churches, is not unfounded. If the Christian concern is with people and not disembodied principles, its concern must be with the conditions under which its people live. Christianity must be concerned with the here and now... Obviously, we do not expect to see the church organising political movements. But it must be with the people, in their lives.¹²²

Luthuli prefigured positions on the Christian church's responsibility to promote social justice taken by fellow American Congregationalist missionary Allen Myrick, Acting Secretary for the American Board mission. In 1966, Myrick advocated for a greater prophetic missiological presence in the conclusion of his 1965 report to the United Common Board for World Ministries (UCBWM), the institutional descendent of the American Board. Myrick advocated the ideals of the Christian church, how it should be involved, how it should participate in the struggle for justice and how it should be vulnerable and risk in faithfulness to God.¹²³ Quoting David Paton, Myrick pleaded at length that the American missionaries in South Africa should

Luthuli was elected to the Governing Council at its 1952 Annual General Meeting. UKZN, APC&SA, AP 370.968 GRA, "The Liquidation of Adams College", 37-8.

¹²⁰ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel #1, "Profile, Chief Albert Luthuli: A Personal Tribute by Z. K. Matthews" in *South African Outlook* 92, no. 1089, 01 January 1962.

¹²¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 130-1.

¹²² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 131.

¹²³ Allan Boesak argued the same perspective almost twenty years later in an address to the National Conference of the South African Council of Churches in July 1979: "I cannot urge that the black church be absorbed by the world, or that the struggle dictate to the church... It is not a Christian struggle I am pleading for, but a Christian presence in the struggle".

Allan Boesak, "The Black Church and the Struggle in South Africa", *Ecumenical Review* 32, 1980, 16-24. Re-printed in:

Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 27 and 35, footnote 1.

be on the forefront of racial integration and social justice.¹²⁴ Myrick articulated these ideals well, ideals that Luthuli learned at Groutville and Adams. For example, after suggesting the UCBWM encourage economic boycotts and sanctions against South African exports, Myrick concluded his report:

I believe that the time is long since past when the Board for World Ministries or its missionaries in South Africa should hesitate in their witness through fear for the future of its institutions or the safety of the Church. God has shown the Church repeatedly through its history that its strength and its future do not rest in the survival of its institutions or the safety of its members, but rather in its obedience to its Lord. I believe that such obedience compels us, missionaries and Board officers and members, to oppose the tyranny of South Africa with all the powers which God has given us.¹²⁵

Judging by Myrick's 1967 and 1968 reports and a correspondence to his African Secretary in 1969, the church in South Africa was not implementing the ideal.

As the introduction to this chapter mentions, Rich more than any other author articulated the relationship between Luthuli and his faith tradition in his piece entitled "Albert Luthuli & the American Board Mission in South Africa" (The Mission).¹²⁶ Rich employed Elpick's ecclesiastic history, the Comaroffs' investigative anthropology and Marks' use of political biography to disclose the extent to which Luthuli's "development was crucially shaped by missionary links".¹²⁷

Despite Luthuli's continued loyalty to the church, Rich correctly posited that during the 1950s Luthuli became "estranged" from the work of the Mission and was subsequently "lost" as his efforts to promote human rights received far more influence in the ANC than it ever could within a hesitant and conservative church.¹²⁸ Evidence reveals that timidity characterised the Mission's communication and solidarity with Luthuli and its views of South African politics. Yet, the church's timidity and

¹²⁴ UHOA, UCBWM Field Secretary Correspondences (UFSC), "Report of the Acting Field Secretary, South African Mission, for the Year 1965, to the United Church Board for World Ministries", from P. Allen Myrick, 22 January 1966.

¹²⁵ UHOA, UFSC, "Report of the Acting Field Secretary, South African Mission, for the Year 1965, to the United Church Board for World Ministries", from P. Allen Myrick, 22 January 1966, 5.

¹²⁶ Rich to some extent rightfully made a distinction between the American Board based in Boston and its mission in Kwazulu and Natal (The Mission). The two entities often did not see 'eye to eye' and had differing missiological outlooks.

¹²⁷ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 190.

¹²⁸ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 202 and 204.

unwillingness to alienate the government was understandable.¹²⁹ Communications between the Mission and the Board at the time indicated that the church experienced long delays and many frustrations in obtaining entry permits for its missionaries.¹³⁰ The Mission felt the impact of Bantu Education legislation as it negatively affected its many schools. The Mission had to be particularly careful not to antagonise the government.¹³¹ For example, in 1953 a petition circulated that objected to Luthuli's first banning. Despite expressing appreciation that there was a petition, Scott considered it "wise" that two colleagues had *not* signed it and she made a counter-proposal, a less risky option, to have the Mission object specifically to Luthuli's inability to attend worship.¹³² By May 1953, Scott had begun to notice that most of Luthuli's contacts were with people outside the American Board circles, though he still attended as a member the *Umlomo* (Executive Committee of an American Board indigenous pastors' conference) meetings.¹³³ Finally in one correspondence, Scott questioned Reuling on the wisdom of travelling to Oslo to observe Luthuli receive the Nobel Peace Prize and suggested that "there might be about as much harm as good resulting from such a move".¹³⁴

The indigenous church leaders and members may have been more prone to inertia than the expatriate lead Mission. Reuling at one time pointed out that perhaps the church might be more politically outspoken if the American Board had not diluted its power to an even more conservative and unimaginative indigenous leadership.¹³⁵ Many African Congregationalists proved even more wary of Luthuli's increasing involvement in politics than their former white American ecclesial paternalists who harboured concerns with the ANC's, and hence Luthuli's, links with Communists.¹³⁶ Many of Luthuli's contemporaries feared that the government could expropriate Mission land, close down additional schools and deny government sponsored bursaries for continuing education as had been the case for Luthuli's own daughter,

¹²⁹ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 196.

¹³⁰ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, unknown, correspondence from Scott to Reuling, 23 November 1961.

¹³¹ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, 52311, correspondence from Scott to Reuling, 15 July 1954.

¹³² UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, unknown, correspondence from Scott to Charma and Jack Taylor, 28 June 1953.

¹³³ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 202.

¹³⁴ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, unknown, correspondence from Scott to Reuling, 23 November 1961.

¹³⁵ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, 52609, correspondence from Reuling to Luthuli, 06 January 1962.

Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 201.

¹³⁶ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 203.

Albertinah.¹³⁷ After commenting on the announcement that Luthuli had won the Peace Prize in a correspondence to Reuling, Scott chirped:

Of course, there are many in South Africa who are either displeased or unimpressed, and this latter group also includes some African people as well as Europeans.¹³⁸

Though resolute in his conviction that the church ought to participate in the fight against injustices in South Africa, Luthuli's possessed moderate expectations of that happening. Luthuli acknowledged the pressures and tactics the government utilised to suppress the church in general. Nevertheless, in his biography, Luthuli expressed disappointment in the lack of prophetic courage possessed by the church.

Church sites in African areas are now held on yearly lease at the pleasure of the Minister [of Native Affairs]. The threat is that, if a sermon or a congregation or a bishop displeases the Department, the site will cease to be available. Parsons must not talk politics... This threat has many Christian ministers and organisations virtually cowering, as of course the government intends. What is becoming of our Christian witness? I am extreme on this point. Let us lose church sites and keep Christian integrity. I disagree with those who want to "save something from the wreck" because what I see happening is the wreck of Christian witness...¹³⁹

One wonders why Luthuli did not mention in his bibliography the closing of his beloved Adams College in December 1956 or any measures he or the ANC undertook to object to it.¹⁴⁰ Luthuli's criticism that the churches did "almost nothing" in reaction to the government's withdrawal of support for Christian mission institutions misleads.¹⁴¹ According to Alan Paton, Adams College "resisted to the end" and exhausted every procedural possibility to save the school from "the evil doctrine that has corrupted so many Christians in a Christian country".¹⁴² From

¹³⁷ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, 52273, correspondence from Scott to Reuling, 20 February 1953. Luthuli's eldest daughter, Albertinah, apparently received a government bursary that was withdrawn as a result of her father's political activities.

¹³⁸ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCM, 52601, correspondence from Scott to Reuling, 04 November 1961.

¹³⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 131-2.

¹⁴⁰ Luthuli possessed a voice in the school's administration. In 1935, the American Board transferred administrative control to a local South African Advisory Board on which Luthuli served. Since 1940, the American Board transferred properties of the College to a domestic body called 'Adams College Incorporated' on whose Council Luthuli also served.

¹⁴¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 131.

¹⁴² UKZN, APC&SA, AP 370.968 GRA, "The Liquidation of Adams College", 6.

Principal George Grant's narration of the closing, one learns that the College mobilised and "received the blessing and backing of important and responsible Church organisations in the country and overseas" – financial included.¹⁴³ The Action Committee of the Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA) became involved by meeting personally with the Minister of Native Affairs who promptly and emphatically dashed any hopes of Adams becoming a private school as "virtually NO NEW Private Schools would be permitted" (The emphasis was that of the Minister of Native Affairs as reported by the Christian Council of South Africa to Adams College).¹⁴⁴ Ironically, F. J. de Villiers, from whom Luthuli learned so much during his days at Adams, wrote the government correspondence refusing permission for Adams College to become a private school thus dooming it to the clutches of a grossly inferior Bantu Education.¹⁴⁵ What measures Luthuli, or the ANC that he led, took to oppose or protest the liquidation of Adams College are unclear. Rich's study on Luthuli and the American Board deduced that Luthuli's ban "left him relatively powerless to influence the debates" surrounding the take over of Adams. In addition, during much of 1955 when the 'storm clouds' gathered over Adams, Luthuli was hospitalised.

Luthuli recognised the 'ambiguities of dependence' in which the Mission existed within South Africa. Luthuli's sympathy with the dilemma the Congregational church faced in part explains how he could be critical of the church and its lack of prophetic action and yet be loyal to it to his death. Evidence of the church's difficult position can be seen in correspondences written to the Board from the Mission after Luthuli's death. For example, Myrick wrote to the Board's Africa Secretary, Chester Marcus, frankly suggesting that the missionaries in South Africa were not inclined to hear 'pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities' from naïve Americans when they concerned interracial modalities. Myrick wrote:

We have mixed feelings about the vote of the General Synod recommending that the UCBWM appoint a group of investigators to visit the Africa mission. On the one hand, we like to show people

¹⁴³ UKZN, APC&SA, AP 370.968 GRA, "The Liquidation of Adams College", 43.

¹⁴⁴ UKZN, APC&SA, AP 370.968 GRA, "The Liquidation of Adams College", 44.

¹⁴⁵ Correspondence to The Secretary of Adams College from F. J. de Villiers, Secretary for Native Affairs, 12 July 1956 found in "The Liquidation of Adams College", 45. Even more ironic, before de Villiers accepted his government post, Adams invited him to be the College's Principal (14).

around and give them an idea of what's going on, as we see it. On the other hand, it will be difficult not to think of these people as another kind of Special Branch. If they come with the aim of helping us do a better job, that's wonderful; but if they are convinced before they come that we've sold out to Apartheid, etc...they will probably see only what they want to see and prove their case on the evidence they find. You can't live by the CORE discipline and stay in South Africa. If we are to be withdrawn because we do not, that decision can be made in [New York] right now.¹⁴⁶

Luthuli sensed that the church would not be the vehicle upon which the majority of South Africans could depend to press for their liberation. First of all, the church was not inclusive. Prior to the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the wider church could not work with and alongside Communists, Muslims and black nationalists within a broad based political movement formed by the Congresses as Luthuli could and did well. During the '50s and '60s, Whites and insularity dominated the Christian churches, whether Congregationalist or other, Father Trevor Huddleston and Archbishop Denis Hurley notwithstanding.¹⁴⁷ Writing from Alice to the UCBWM in 1967, Myrick confided:

Perhaps the greatest single problem which the Church (including both the Bantu Congregational Church in Natal and the Witwatersrand Congregational Church in the Transvaal) faces is conservatism. Pastors and laymen alike are firmly settled in traditional patterns of life and work. This means that the pastor is primarily a mechanic who keeps the wheels of the church machinery moving and who rarely asks what the machine is for. The pastor is an organiser, collector of funds, dispenser of sacraments, preacher and revivalist. The temptation for him to conform to the stereotypes of the past is almost overwhelming; and this temptation is enforced by a deep-seated legalism which is accepted by most ministers and lay people. Add to conservatism and legalism an omnipresent clericalism, and one has a powerful bulwark of the status quo.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ UHOA, UFSC, correspondence from Allen Myrick to Chester Marcus, 31 July 1969.

¹⁴⁷ On 24 October 1955, the Anglican monastic order Community of the Resurrection recalled Huddleston from South Africa. Whether the recall was due to a perceived narcissism in Huddleston, a concern that church was being eclipsed by a personality or the inherent conservativeness of the church and its hesitancy to excessively antagonise the government is debatable.

Piers McGrandle, *Trevor Huddleston: Turbulent Priest* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 99.

Archbishop Denis Hurley was the youngest Archbishop within the Catholic church. Some projected he would be the youngest cardinal, and someday Pope. His uncompromising stance against Apartheid placed a glass ceiling on his ascendancy within the Catholic hierarchy.

¹⁴⁸ UHOA, UFSC, "Report of the Acting Field Secretary, South African Mission, for the Year 1966, to the United Church Board for World Ministries", from Allen Myrick, 25 January 1967, 1.

In the same correspondence, Myrick referred to the upcoming 1967 union of the London Mission Society (LMS), the Congregational Union of South Africa (CUSA) and the Bantu Congregational Church (BCC) churches. Myrick described the LMS as Botswana's state church, CUSA as dominated by a white minority and the BCC as preoccupied with internal power struggles and provincial and ethnic (Zulu) concerns only. Myrick's 1967 report to the UCBWM, elaborated on the Natal churches' weaknesses. Predominantly white CUSA members had not formerly worked on an equal basis and in partnership with Blacks. Furthermore, CUSA's administrative and business practices were Eurocentric. This led to Africans being marginalised from the leadership of the church. Myrick noted that three of the four officers of the Natal Regional Council were Whites and the one Black who served as Vice-Chairman had little influence. Furthermore, despite playing "lip-service" to multi-racialism, the local churches remained segregated.¹⁴⁹ Prior to and during Luthuli's meteoric rise to the heights of ANC leadership, none of the three uniting churches poised itself to play a prophetic role in Luthuli's struggle for liberation.

The failure of the Mission to rally to Luthuli's aid did not diminish his loyalty to it. Yes, Luthuli was critical of the church's history, stances and impotency to deal with that which diminished the African majority's humanity. But, he was not critical of Christian, or Congregational, ideals to which the church more than imperfectly adhered. Luthuli remained steadfast and devoted to those ideals despite the failure of the church to realise them. Because of the church's failure to realise its ideals, Luthuli responded to his own question, "Why should we use the weapon of politics? It is because the vote is the key to freedom and peace".¹⁵⁰

First Ban

Soon after taking office, Luthuli acquainted himself with a constituency with which he was in large part unfamiliar given his rapid rise to the apex of the ANC leadership. In February 1953, Luthuli visited Alexandra township outside Johannesburg where the Defiance Campaign was called off, Cape Town where he

¹⁴⁹ UHOA, UFSC, "Report of the Acting Field Secretary, South African Mission, for the Year 1967 to the United Church Board for World Ministries", from Allen Myrick, 30 January 1968.

¹⁵⁰ Albert Luthuli, "What Is Aimed at with the African People", speech made in 1956 taken from the Treason Trial records. Cited by: Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 94.

attended the Executive of the CCSA and to Port Elizabeth where he met with the impressively organised Cape branch of the ANC. Luthuli returned home to Natal briefly to address the 6th Annual Conference of the Natal Indian Congress in Durban wherein he extolled those who participated in the Non-Violent Passive Resistance Campaign and encouraged them to “KEEP MARCHING ON TO FREEDOM WHATEVER THE COST AND SACRIFICE” (Luthuli’s emphasis).¹⁵¹ Luthuli then travelled to the Free State to visit the ANC’s branch to strengthen its weak stature within the ANC structures.

On 30 May 1953, the government banned Luthuli for one year from attending any political or public gatherings and prohibited him from entering any major city.¹⁵² The legal basis for the ban fell under the Riotous Assemblies Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act. This ban was the first of four (1953, 1954, 1959 and 1964) that hamstrung Luthuli’s efforts to lead the ANC as President-General. Luthuli’s ban confined him to small population centres and to private meetings for the remainder of 1953. Under his first ban, Luthuli risked arrest for attending Sunday worship. Refusing to ask permission to attend regular worship services that were open to the ‘public’, Luthuli only attended Holy Communion services on the rather dubious assumption that as the minister serves Holy Communion only to communicants, those services could be considered ‘private’.

The end of 1953 closed with the ANC national conference from 18-20 December in Queenstown, a smaller city so that Luthuli and other banned Congress leaders could stealthily attend. The Conference received Luthuli’s Presidential address delivered by another wherein he revealed the motivation behind his leadership:

This annual getting-together of ours may be a most un-welcomed event among those Whites who mistakenly believe that denying us opportunities for free association and free speech will stop us from fighting for our rights and so ensure white domination over us. They forget that the urge and yearning for freedom springs from a sense of DIVINE DISCONTENT and so, having a divine origin, can never be permanently humanly gagged and that human effort to artificially gag it by means of harsh discriminatory laws and by threats must result in

¹⁵¹ UNISA, UL, UA, DCAF, SAIC, 105, 7.1.8, Albert Luthuli’s opening address “Let Us March Together in Freedom”, presented at the Sixth Annual Provincial Conference, Durban, 21-22 February 1953, 5.

¹⁵² UHOA, “Mayibuye Afrika”, 1993.

suspicion, strains and tensions among individuals or groups in a nation, as, unfortunately, is the state of things in our country, the Union of South Africa (Luthuli's emphasis).¹⁵³

Call for Non-Violent "Freedom Volunteers"

In March 1954, Luthuli attended the Natal Indian Congress in Durban and a meeting of the Congresses' Joint Executive [ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Congress of Democrats (COD) and the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO)] in Tongaat to organise the planning for the upcoming Congress of the People.¹⁵⁴ Shortly after his ban expired at the end of May, Luthuli travelled to Uitenhage where he addressed the annual conference of the Cape Provincial Congress.¹⁵⁵ Immediately thereafter, Luthuli travelled to Johannesburg to attend a "Resist Apartheid" conference.¹⁵⁶

During most of Luthuli's speaking engagements in the winter of 1954, he called for the enrolment of 50,000 'Freedom Volunteers' in the spirit of the Defiance Campaign. In a 05 September speech delivered on his behalf for the first Natal Congress of the People held in Durban, Luthuli called for "a harmless army of non-violent voluntary organisers and propagandists whose twin task is to be to interest and enrol people for the Congress of the People meetings..."¹⁵⁷ The call for Freedom Volunteers harkened back to Gandhi's call for *Satyagrahis* (those committed to using non-violent means and soldiers of truth). Luthuli's speech emphasised two themes this investigation highlights: theological motivations and non-violence.

¹⁵³ Document 3a: "Presidential Address by Chief A. J. Lutuli" at the ANC Annual Conference of December 18-20, 1953.

Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter, eds. *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964*, "Challenge and Violence, 1953-1964" (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1977), 3: 115-6.

¹⁵⁴ 23 March 1954.

"The Legacy of Inkosi Albert Luthuli", 13.

¹⁵⁵ 26 June 1954.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 127.

¹⁵⁶ 27 June 1954.

"The Legacy of Inkosi Albert Luthuli", 13.

Luthuli erred when he stated in his autobiography that following his visit to Port Elizabeth, he returned to Durban to give an opening address in Durban at the Natal Indian Congress (144). If Luthuli attended a conference in Johannesburg a day after the conference in Port Elizabeth, then he had to travel directly from Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg and could not have returned to Durban in the interim. Luthuli and/or the Hoopers chronologically misplaced Luthuli's opening address to the Natal Indian Congress. Luthuli addressed this event in March 1954.

¹⁵⁷ Albert Luthuli, "Let Us Speak Together of Freedom", *Fighting Talk* 10, no. 10, October 1954, 4-5. Printed version of Luthuli's address to the Natal Congress of the People's Congress.

This situation presents an inescapable challenge to religious leaders in our country, especially Christian leaders who proclaim a God-inspired message that all men are created in the image of God and so "Are born equal", and that divine approbation, now or in the hereafter, will be determined by the efforts one makes to help his less fortunate brother, and not on his efforts at self-preservation and self-elevation...It must, however, enjoin our people in words, actions and attitudes to respect the policy of non-violence wisely adopted by our Congresses. Non-violent resistance in any provocative situation is our best instrument. Our strongest weapon is to acquaint our people and the world with the facts of our situation.¹⁵⁸

Second Ban

On 11 July 1954, less than a month and a half after Luthuli had campaigned without restriction, the government imposed a second ban on him the moment he stepped off the plane on his way to address a protest of the planned evictions of Sophiatown. Luthuli's first ban at least allowed him to attend meetings in small towns around South Africa. The second ban prevented Luthuli from attending public gatherings and confined him to the Stanger magisterial area in the Lower Tugela region for two years thereby allowing Luthuli to still operate effectively as the leader of the ANC as long as private meetings were held there. Before returning home, Luthuli watched the Sophiatown protest from a private home while his message was delivered *in absentia*.¹⁵⁹ Luthuli again sounded his theological refrain:

Contrary to the plan and purpose of God our Creator, who "created all men equal", and to us too, not to Whites only, He breathed the divine spirit of human dignity...Through gatherings like this in all centres, we mean to mobilise our people to speak with this one voice and say to white South Africa: WE HAVE NO DESIGNS TO ELBOW OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA ANYONE, BUT EQUALLY WE HAVE NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER OF ABANDONING OUR DIVINE RIGHT ACCORDING TO THE HOLY AND PERFECT PLAN OF OUR CREATOR: APARTHEID CAN NEVER BE SUCH A PLAN (Luthuli's emphasis).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 80.

¹⁵⁹ Luthuli watched from 'Mabuza's' home.

UHOA, "Mayibuye Afrika", 1993.

¹⁶⁰ Document 5: Message to "Resist Apartheid" Campaign, by Chief A. J. Lutuli, 11 July 1954. Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 132-3.

Luthuli's ban also prohibited his attendance at the annual national ANC conference at the Bantu Social Centre in Durban from 16-19 December 1954. In his address, again delivered *in absentia*, Luthuli expressed his pleasure that the World Council of Churches (WCC) condemned Apartheid at their gathering in Evanston, Illinois. Luthuli highlighted 1954 as a year that a good number of churches in the Union and overseas, especially the Church of England, publicly decried Apartheid.

Clerical opinion is gradually allying itself with the aspirations of the Africans. Special recognition was being taken of the uncompromising rejection of the Bantu Education Act by the Roman Catholic Church and the Authorities of the Diocese of Johannesburg under the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves.¹⁶¹

Luthuli continued his address praising "that Great Christian Crusader, John Collins, for his visit" and indicated that he lived the words of the Christian hymn "Let Courage Rise with Danger".¹⁶² In this speech, Luthuli debated with those Africans who utilised defeatist arguments to dampen the mood of those fighting for liberation. He contested conservative theological reasons for not prosecuting the struggle such as 'God in his own time will give us freedom without our exertion' and 'convert the white man first by being moderate in your demands'. Luthuli responded that God demands obedience, sacrifice and action.

They forget that God has long been waiting for African Freedom Volunteers whom He could harness to the noble cause of bringing freedom to all people in Africa. These false leaders would have the African accept the shadow for the substance, thus rendering himself guilty before God of having a perverted sense of values that exalts expediency above principle and a mere mess of pottage – crumbs of apartheid – above freedom, our basic God-given heritage.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ *Ilanga Lase Natal*, "Luthuli 'Addresses' Congress Conference in Durban", 25 December 1954.

¹⁶² Document 7a: Presidential Address by Chief A. J. Lutuli at the ANC Annual Conference of December 16-19, 1954.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 137-8. See also:

Canon L. John Collins, "Challenge to the Churches", *Sechaba* 3, no. 1, January 1969, 14-5.

¹⁶³ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 138.

Stroke

In early 1955, Luthuli suffered a severe health condition that kept him in a virtual comatose state.¹⁶⁴ Luthuli recalled his hospitalisation to have been at least two months. In an interview, Albertinah Luthuli recalled the time her father fell ill.

...he wasn't accurate about putting the fork in the mouth. And then my mother would say, "Houw! "What is the matter?" Missing the mouth and then getting it in the mouth again. And over a few days, and it, and then one morning, it just got worse.

The family phoned Dr. Mordeciah Gumede in Inanda. Gumede came and examined Luthuli, confirming that he had a stroke.

And so, together, everybody now handled the thing, the issue of how to get him to McCord Hospital quickly now...Dr. Taylor was the superintendent of McCord Hospital for a long long time. He was at the American Board Mission hospital, American Board Mission, Congregational, of course. And he was a good friend of Baba. And they were very close, actually. And they phoned Dr. Taylor, and told him, "This is what we are faced with now". Then he was in a position to use his influence to expedite things. So all of them worked together, you know, to get him in as soon as possible...¹⁶⁵

At McCord, doctors again determined that Luthuli suffered a stroke, induced by high blood pressure, and treated him. All was well, until Luthuli's condition deteriorated again. Albertinah expressed that it was "very very sudden and frightening". She explained that a specialist surgeon was summoned who diagnosed that Luthuli had a coronary whilst recovering from the stroke.

In his autobiography, Luthuli drew attention to his illness and subsequent "relapse", but recovered before the opening of the Congress of the People.¹⁶⁶ Despite his stroke and two month hospitalisation, Luthuli drafted messages or at least approved messages written in his name. A Foreign Service dispatch from the Pretoria Embassy to the United States' State Department quoted messages from Luthuli written in *New Age* (19 May) and *Bantu World* (28 May):

¹⁶⁴ *Drum*, "Prayers for Luthuli", 19 March 1955.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Albertinah Luthuli, 06 January 2006, Luthuli Museum, Groutville, Kwadukuza.

¹⁶⁶ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 151.

Luthuli said that people from all corners of South Africa would assemble in Johannesburg on June 25 and 26 to attend the great Congress of the People. "This assembly will take place at a time when the political situation in South Africa has never been so critical"...Luthuli's message further stated, "The country is faced with an impending fascist republic built on apartheid which has been condemned the world over...This year we shall rededicate ourselves to the struggle for freedom in that great assembly of the people where we shall write a charter of freedom".¹⁶⁷

Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter

The Congress of the People took place at Kliptown, Johannesburg in June 1955 and it was at this event that the Congresses adopted the Freedom Charter.¹⁶⁸ The Congress of the People awarded Luthuli the *Isitwalandwe* (Wearer of Indwe Feather) *in absentia*.¹⁶⁹ Trevor Huddleston, who wrote *Naught for Your Comfort*, and Yusuf Dadoo, head of the Indian National Congress, also received the award. The selection of a Black, White and Indian no doubt intended to convey a sense that the struggle against white supremacy was a struggle best fought by a broad multiracial alliance. The selection of *Doctor* Dadoo, who was a Communist, along with *Father* Huddleston and *Chief* Luthuli, also evinced a broad ideological alliance. Wilson Conco opened the meeting as Chair and proclaimed that the new award will be made "to individuals who have distinguished themselves in the struggle of the people of South Africa".¹⁷⁰ Arthur Letele, the ANC's Treasurer-General, read a message to the Congress of the People from Luthuli.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Luthuli House, Johannesburg, Archives Division, "Foreign Service Dispatch No. 304 from the Pretoria Embassy (Washington, D. C.) to the United States State Department", 02 June 1955. The purpose of the dispatch was to paint the Congresses movement as "Communitic". The subject of the dispatch read: "Communist Activities: 'Congress of the People'". The dispatch asserted that the ANC was "Communist-penetrated". The dispatch also acknowledged that the "general membership is not Communist-inclined". Interestingly, the dispatch indicated that the Conference would be difficult to hold successfully due to "Government counter-measures and to [the] recently-lowered prestige of the ANC". The dispatch disclosed that the Conference could be banned, but the government would allow its holding with the expectation that it would fail.

¹⁶⁸ At the August 1953 Cape Provincial Congress, Prof. Z. K. Matthews proposed a national convention by which all of the liberation movements might gather to discern the solutions to the country's problems and to draft a document called a Freedom Charter that would envision a democratic South Africa.

¹⁶⁹ The Indwe bird is a 'rare' legendary bird whose feathers are only worn by the bravest warriors. The term is of Xhosa origin.

¹⁷⁰ McGrandle, *Trevor Huddleston*, 90.

¹⁷¹ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 188.

Again, a historical review of the Freedom Charter need not be accomplished in this investigation as the event is covered adequately in dozens of South African history books.¹⁷² Though the Freedom Charter was drafted during Luthuli's time as President-General, though he participated the Congress' planning during the later half of 1953 and though he advertised its drafting in May, he had little to do with its compilation.¹⁷³ Luthuli did not even see the Freedom Charter in draft form and in fact was not privy to reading it before ratification by the Congress of the People.¹⁷⁴ One source stated the case quite bluntly:

After reading the document and realising the ANC, despite its numerical superiority, had been subordinated to one vote in a five member multiracial and trade union "Congress Alliance", Luthuli rejected the Charter but then later accepted it partly to counter the more radical Africanist wing whom he likened to black Nazis.¹⁷⁵

One can read into Luthuli's autobiography the above characterisation of Luthuli's disappointment with the Freedom Charter. In an effort not to appear too fractious, Luthuli gently lamented the prose of the Charter, calling it "uneven", "vague", at times unnecessarily pedantic and "open to criticism".¹⁷⁶ Like a wise statesman, Luthuli attributed the poor summation of the people's will to a lack of coordination, administration and time management rather than to rifts within the Alliance.¹⁷⁷ If the

¹⁷² Dubow, *The African National Congress*, 45-58.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 56-69.

No author, *Selected Writings on The Freedom Charter 1955-1985: A Sechaba Commemorative Publication* (London: African National Congress, 1985).

¹⁷³ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3, 60. See endnote 190, 94.

¹⁷⁴ In the days before the Congress of the People (22 June), only the ANC's Working Committee saw the draft (including Sisulu, Mandela and Joe Matthews). On the day of the Congress (25 June), only the ANC's National Executive (including Conco) reviewed the draft.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 60. See endnote 190, 94.

¹⁷⁵ Oxford University Press, "Luthuli, Albert John: Biography", 4. Found at: www.answers.com/topic/albert-luthuli, accessed 05 January 2008.

This reference to Luthuli's views on the Africanists should be read skeptically. Luthuli rarely, if ever, used such incendiary comparisons or identifications.

¹⁷⁶ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 151 and 153.

¹⁷⁷ In her commentary to "An Inventory to the Microfilm Collection of the Albert J. Luthuli Papers", Dorothy Woodson of the State University of New York at Buffalo stated, "For both political and personal, the collection, although extensive, is not comprehensive. Notably absent are...certain correspondences between Luthuli and his intimate circle of lieutenants from the African National Congress...This material relates to some of the more controversial clauses and recommended amendments in the Freedom Charter before this document was passed at the 'Congress of the People' on June 26, 1955". The documents do exist. Conversations within the family intimate that the papers were smuggled out at the request of the ANC, but taken to the United States without permission by the husband of one of Luthuli's daughters and not necessarily returned to the ANC. Woodson continued, "It is rumoured that the remainder of the Luthuli papers—that is, those documents not included on

Communists or the trade unionist marginalised Luthuli as the leader of the ANC during the drafting of the Freedom Charter, it would not be the only time that the leader of the ANC did not have his hands on the levers of influence when a crucial decision, such as the decision to launch *MK*, was made.

In October 1955, the Natal ANC gathered to discuss, decide upon and propose redactions to the Charter before it was considered for ratification by the ANC's annual conference in December. Luthuli and his colleagues prepared a careful resolution from Natal to the national conference expressing, contrary to Ngubane's published criticism of the ANC, "unreserved acceptance of the principles reflected in all the main clauses of the Freedom Charter" and congratulations for its formulation.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the resolution also expressed concerns that merited the Charter's reappraisal before the final document should be ratified. Luthuli exhibited a tendency to solemnly request additional and careful deliberation of an issue when he harboured grave concerns about a proposal. Luthuli and Natal "strongly urged

microfilm and which are currently in the possession of a private party here in the United States, will be returned to Africa to a yet un-determined place". Woodson acknowledged that this private party and the Luthuli Memorial Foundation allowed a portion of the papers to be filmed by the Cooperative Africana Microfilm Project of the Center for Research Libraries (CAMP). At this time, where the missing documents are is unknown.

UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, Introduction to "An Inventory to the Microfilm Collection of the Albert J. Luthuli Papers" by Dorothy Woodson, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1981, 1-2.

¹⁷⁸ UW, WCL, African National Congress (ANC), AD 2186, Ga93, Albert Luthuli, "A Reply to Mr. Jordan Ngubane's Attacks on the African National Congress", 05 June 1956, 7.

Although Luthuli signed this document, I suspect that it was drafted for him prior to its redaction and approval. The many caustic phrases and sarcastic style were highly uncharacteristic of Luthuli. For example, "Mr. Ngubane [should] employ the services of a more reliable detective agency", "[Ngubane's] half-baked knowledge..." border on insulting and this type of invective was rarely, if ever, used by Luthuli (1 and 9, respectively). Notwithstanding these qualifications regarding style, archival evidence confirmed the sentiments and rationale expressed in the retort to Ngubane are Luthuli's.

UCT, MAD, LC, BCZA 78/46-7), Reel # 1 and continued on Reel #2 (CAMP MF 2914), notes in English and *Isizulu*, "Inaccuracies in Ngubane Allegations", "Ngubane Reply", 1956.

My suspicions about a second writer are confirmed in a 08 June 1956 correspondence to Mary-Louise Hooper. Luthuli confided, "Let me not give myself all the credit for the reply to Jordan. We did it with.....Nokukhanya went to visit him at his home. He is well".

UCT, MAD, LC, BCZA 78/46-7), Reel #1 (CAMP MF 2914), correspondence from Luthuli to Mary-Louise Hooper, 08 June 1956, 3.

Luthuli wrote a cordial and professional correspondence to Ngubane before his reply was published. Luthuli's correspondence included many of the same phrases used in the published reply. Luthuli's handwritten response addressed Ngubane's observations regarding the ANC, apprehension about the Congress becoming Communistic and press criticism of the ANC. Luthuli's correspondence included a consistent reiteration that his criticisms of the Freedom Charter voiced in the Natal ANC resolution (of which he "shared fully in the drafting") did not imply that he disagreed with its overall ethos and wording. Luthuli set the record straight when he stated that "[the Natal resolution] expresses my own feeling, but the resolution does not indicate a fundamental difference [with the Charter]".

UCT, MAD, LC, BCZA 78/46-7), Reel #1 (CAMP MF 2914), correspondence from Luthuli to Jordan Ngubane, 20 June 1956, 2.

‘careful scrutiny’ and full discussion before final ratification”.¹⁷⁹ Luthuli and Natal criticised the section on equal rights for “national groups”, for Luthuli sympathised with the Africanist perspective (perhaps for different reasons) that racial groups should not be emphasised. Luthuli felt that a united ‘non-racial’ rather than a ‘multiracial’ nation should be envisioned. In possible prescience of post-liberation Black Economic Empowerment, Natal indicated that courts should simply be impartial and not necessarily “representative” of all racial groups. Luthuli and Natal expressed anxious unease with certain portions of the Charter that expressed “good propaganda but...not appropriate in a factual document”.¹⁸⁰ Natal’s response to the Charter further reflected Luthuli’s critiques, namely, portions of it were too detailed for a document of universal appeal. For example, the ANC Natal felt that references to the length of the work week and various forms of assistance to farmers should be excised. Finally, in a possible stab at the Communists, Natal, possibly influenced by Luthuli’s strong Protestant work ethic, stated that lazy persons should expect to go hungry. Luthuli subtly indicated in his autobiography that the presence of outside influences (“principles not previously a part of Congress policy”), and this study adds, his disagreement with certain aspects of the Charter, necessitated the ANC’s separate adoption of the Charter.¹⁸¹

Despite all of these concerns about the Charter within the ANC, the ANC working committee, Indians, sympathetic Whites in Johannesburg publicised and promoted the Charter as if its ratification in December 1955 would be a foregone conclusion. At a 19-20 November NEC meeting at Luthuli’s home, Matthews felt much angst because ANC members signed their names, thus endorsing the Charter without ANC approval. The members usurped the ANC’s role as the leader of the liberation movement and bestowed it upon a consultative body.

The same dynamic is observed in 1961. Some viewed the ANC’s decision to initiate violence as a foregone conclusion after the Joint Congresses’ decision to form *MK*, just as some viewed the ANC’s ratification of the Charter as a foregone conclusion after its acceptance at the Congress of the People. In the *formation* of the Freedom Charter and *MK*, preliminary stages of democratic consensus were met and then prematurely *implemented* as *de facto* policy by members of the Congresses

¹⁷⁹ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 66.

¹⁸⁰ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 66.

¹⁸¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 154.

movement primarily based in Johannesburg and thus circumventing the ANC's procedures and its President-General, Luthuli.

Due to divisions concerning the Africanists' protests to the Charter, poor planning, the confiscation of important documents by the police in September, a controversial letter from Xuma and various accreditation disputes, the 17-18 December 1955 ANC conference in Bloemfontein postponed the decision to ratify the Freedom Charter until a special meeting scheduled on 31 March – 01 April 1956 in Orlando. At the December conference, Luthuli, through Matthews, delivered Luthuli's "Special Presidential Message". Luthuli began by expressing his appreciation to all for their support of him and his family during his illness.

I would be untrue to the deepest human feelings if I did not, on behalf of my family and myself, commence my message by expressing our deepest thanks to the Almighty for bringing about my miraculous recovery. I would like to closely associate in these thanks to the Almighty the staff at McCord Hospital who were willing and devoted instruments in God's hands in bringing about this recovery.¹⁸²

During his address, Luthuli included what was from him a frequent Christocentric mantra "No Cross, No Crown" when encouraging Africans to quickly accept the "gospel of SERVICE AND SACRIFICE FOR THE GENERAL AND LARGE GOOD WITHOUT EXPECTING A PERSONAL (AND AT THAT IMMEDIATE) REWARD" (Luthuli's emphasis).¹⁸³ The conference did manage to re-elect Luthuli to a second three year term as President-General of the ANC with Tambo as the Secretary.

Still banned, Luthuli sent a "note" expressing his views in lieu of his presence to the March-April meeting that met to discuss whether to ratify the Charter. Though the note expressed agreement with the Charter in principle, Luthuli recommended that the delegates "discuss very carefully such things as, for example, the principle of nationalisation".¹⁸⁴ Complete nationalisation would have been a vision of Communists and trade unionists whose influence and support in the liberation

¹⁸² Document 13a: Albert Luthuli, "Special Presidential Address", ANC Annual Conference of 17-18 December 1955.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 210.

¹⁸³ Document 13a: Albert Luthuli, "Special Presidential Address", ANC Annual Conference of 17-18 December 1955.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 213.

¹⁸⁴ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 154.

struggle Luthuli welcomed but to whose political ideology he did not subscribe. Throughout his leadership of the ANC, Luthuli rebuffed those inside and outside the ANC, such as Ngubane who wished to ostracise Communists.¹⁸⁵ Luthuli refused to keep Communists at arm's length while simultaneously he remained wary of any inappropriate influence they may have exerted to forward their socio-political and economic aspirations at the expense of liberation, more specifically, liberation of the black majority as represented by the ANC.¹⁸⁶ Luthuli felt confident in his ability to contain the Communists within the movement. Quoting Kitchener in the British war cabinet, Peter Hjul of the Liberal Party calculated that the Communists had to support Luthuli "because of his immense popularity with the people".¹⁸⁷ Luthuli's warning to the delegates at the ANC meeting to "discuss [the Charter] very fully" was compatible with his democratic style of leadership.

Despite Luthuli's concerns with the Charter, the meeting eventually adopted it without revision. Ultimately, Luthuli yielded to the decision thus overriding his own objections. In his testimony directed to the defence at the Treason Trial, Luthuli intimated, "Unfortunately, there was no adequate discussion of the economic clauses of the Charter" as the Congress felt it necessary to close ranks against the Africanist objections.¹⁸⁸ A similar dynamic and pattern of leadership from Luthuli occurred in 1961 and 1962 when the ANC decided against his objections to form *MK* and launch the armed struggle. Though Luthuli strenuously disagreed with a given position, he yielded to a perceived consensus arrived at by a democratically arrived decision.

Congregationalism's emphasis on individual land tenure made the 1913 Native Land Act (allocating 8% of land to Blacks) an especially pernicious piece of legislation for Luthuli. Though still banned in May 1956, Luthuli addressed through a representative the Conference on the Group Areas Act convened by the Natal Indian Congress. In his address to the conference, Luthuli lamented the long litany of increasingly oppressive land legislation leading up to the Group Areas Act of 1950;

¹⁸⁵ *Drum*, "Congress Has Something Up Its Sleeve!" by Jordan Ngubane, December 1955, 61.

¹⁸⁶ Barbara Wahlberg, "Jordan Khush Ngubane: Journalist or Politician" (B. A., Honours diss., Faculty of Arts, University of Natal, Durban, November, 2002), 42.

UW, WCL, ANC, AD 2186, Ga93, Albert Luthuli, "A Reply to Mr. Jordan Ngubane's Attacks on the African National Congress", 05 June 1956, 5-11.

Drum, "How Red Is Congress?", by Albert Luthuli, January 1955, 27-8.

¹⁸⁷ UKZN, APA&SA, no reference provided, correspondence from Peter Hjul to Peter Brown, 19 May 1959, 1.

¹⁸⁸ "Statement taken from Chief Albert Luthuli" for the defence in the Treason Trial. Cited by: Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 71. See endnote 225, 95.

he focused on the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act that promised more land to be allocated to Africans (allocating 13% of land to Blacks). Luthuli continued to argue that the quality of land was pathetically poor, advocating that while the ANC stood for a policy where South Africa belonged to all who lived in it:

It is most important and urgent that white South Africa, supporting as it does territorial segregation, should make available to Africans land sufficient to enable those of them living on the land to make a living reasonably in accordance with civilised standards of life.¹⁸⁹

This argument reverted back to the purpose of the original Native Reserves and the role the American Board missionaries played in trying to ensure from the colonial authorities that adequate land be designated for the indigenous population.

In July 1965, Luthuli's two year ban expired. Following his election as President-General and after each expired ban, the National Party government provided Luthuli a few months to reform his ways. Luthuli, with a sense of humour, commented that he always "misbehaved".¹⁹⁰ In October 1956, he addressed the South African Indian Congress in Johannesburg on the theme "A Spirit that Refuses to Submit to Tyranny".¹⁹¹ Luthuli, as he did with all his speeches, expounded on spiritual concepts as much as he did political, his speeches doubled as homiletic orations. Sensitive to his Indian audience that was primarily Hindu and Muslim, Luthuli utilised phrases such as the "blessings and guidance of the Almighty", "Noble Divine concepts of man", "Providence", "Divine heritage" and "our honour as created being[s] of God". Luthuli alluded to Christian scriptures when he opined:

Rather lose all than those our souls and honour and so save ourselves
the shame of earning the disdain of our contemporaries and the
condemnation of posterity but worse suffer eternal damnation for

¹⁸⁹ UNISA, UL, UA, DCAS, SAIC, 105, 7.6.9.2, Box 9, Paper by Albert Luthuli, "Some Aspects of the Apartheid Union Land Laws and Policy as Affecting Africans", Conference on the Group Areas Act Convened by the Natal Indian Congress, Durban, 05-06 May 1956, 4-5.

Also found in:

UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47 (CAMP MF 2914), Reel #1.

¹⁹⁰ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 144.

¹⁹¹ LM, MYP, Opening Address by Albert Luthuli to the 22nd Biennial Congress of the South African Indian Congress Meeting, "A Spirit that Refuses to Submit to Tyranny", Gandhi Hall, Johannesburg, 19-21 October 1956.

Also found at:

UNISA, UL, UA, DCAS, SAIC, 105, 6.1.11.

UW, WCL, FSAW, AD1137, Ee2.1.

indeed what will profit it to gain the whole world but to lose his own soul?¹⁹²

In mid-1956, Luthuli also addressed an inter-racial conference whose theme was “The Struggle Must Go On, Bans or No Bans” and in December visited Swaziland with Yengwa and Conco. Upon his return on 05 December 1956, the government arrested Luthuli in Groutville on a charge of High Treason.

Treason Trial

Police arrested Luthuli at his home early on the morning of 05 December 1956 on the charge of “High Treason” under the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act. After many papers were confiscated from his home, Luthuli was transported to Durban and thereafter with Yengwa and others to Pretoria by a Dakota military transport plane. Luthuli and dozens of others met at the Old Fort Prison in Johannesburg. Good company comforted Luthuli a great deal during his first experience in jail. What was to be known as the ‘Treason Trial’ brought together the brightest and best of South Africa’s liberation movement. A total of 156 were arrested and accused, of whom 105 were African, 23 White, 21 Indian and 7 Coloured. Naicker, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ben Turok, Zachariah and Joe Matthews, Reggie September, Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi, Ida Mntwana, Duma Nokwe, Moses Kotane, Joe Slovo, Oliver Tambo and dozens of others stood accused. Luthuli noted in his autobiography that among the Trialists were two Anglican priests: Father Gawe and Father James Calata. The authorities divided the prisoners into two cells with one priest incarcerated with each group. Calata conducted worship services on Sundays. Luthuli observed that the occasion was an all expense paid meeting of the “Joint Executive of the Congresses” “who could at last confer *sine die* at any level we liked” and Mandela almost gleefully called it “the largest and longest unbanned meeting of the Congress Alliance in years”.¹⁹³ Press accounts and cheering crowds indicated that the Treason Trial became a new rallying point for the liberation

¹⁹² LM, MYP, Opening Address by Albert Luthuli to the 22nd Biennial Congress of the South African Indian Congress Meeting, “A Spirit that Refuses to Submit to Tyranny”, Gandhi Hall, Johannesburg, 19-21 October 1956, 1-2, 4.

¹⁹³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 160.

Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (London: Abacus, 1995), 234.

movement. After the acrimony with Ngubane and the Africanists, solidarity in the midst of confrontation by the government must have been something of a relief for Luthuli. Displaying again a sense of humour, Luthuli indicated in his autobiography that he must give credit where credit was due:

I doubt whether we could have devised so effective a method ensuring cohesion in resistance and of enlarging its embrace, as did the government when it set the Trial in motion.¹⁹⁴

Despite the accused's delight at being brought together, none failed to comprehend the gravity of the situation. High Treason carried the death penalty. The period covered by the charges was 01 October 1952 to 13 December 1956. The Defiance Campaign, Sophiatown removal and the Congress of the People were all included. All the accused were released on bail for the duration of the trial.

The preparatory examination began on 19 December 1956. The result of this stage determined if the case would be tried by the Supreme Court. On 21 December, bail was set for all of the accused.¹⁹⁵ The Treason Trial Defence Fund started by Bishop Ambrose Reeves, Alan Paton and Alex Hepple covered all the bail costs. The preparatory examination continued on 09 January 1957 until 11 September 1957 during which time the Alexandria bus boycott occurred and rural unrest raged in Zeerust, Sekhukhuniland and the Transkei.

During the Treason Trial, Luthuli's leadership style confronted the government enough to be popular with black nationalists yet remained sufficiently moderate to encourage crucial public support from Christian organisations that provided much of the Trialists' financial and moral support. Among the visitors the Trialists received in jail were Bishop Ambrose Reeves (Trevor Huddleston's replacement), Rev. Arthur Blaxall and Dominee Du Toit. During the preparatory trial, Luthuli fell ill and the court allowed him to be absent for a month. Reeves offered Luthuli a spiritual retreat at St. Benedict's House in Rosettenville so as to regain his health.

The ecclesiastic links are not immaterial. Reeves generated a great deal of international sympathy for the liberation movements. Blaxall considered himself a dear friend of Luthuli; their relationship dated back to Luthuli's service on the

¹⁹⁴ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 165.

¹⁹⁵ Elinor Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 129.

Christian Council and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Blaxall was one of the first to personally congratulate Luthuli at his home following the announcement of his winning the Nobel Prize.¹⁹⁶ Du Toit led the delegation to Madras, India in 1938. When the issue of violence arose in 1961, the weight of all these Christian colleagues who could not, for right or wrong, countenance violence collectively pressed on Luthuli's conscience.

Luthuli's ability to establish close relationships solidified his influence in the Congresses' movement. Those who interacted with Luthuli sensed a deep integrity and became loyal to him. At the Treason Trial, Luthuli grew very close to Moses Kotane, one-time Secretary-General of the Communist Party and a Treasurer of the ANC, who many considered to be his closest political confidant. In a 1973 interview with Sonya Bunting, Kotane himself indicated how close the two were:

It was during the Treason Trial that Chief and I started working together. We were very cordial because we stood for national liberation and our views coincided. He was very broad-minded and never narrow. I was his confidant. At times he called me to explain things to him because others had failed to convince him.¹⁹⁷

The archives identify Luthuli as the leader of the liberation movement and bear testimony to his strength of character, intelligence and charismatic leadership style. Luthuli 'held the reins' of the ANC and the Joint Congresses. During the Treason Trial, many testified to the fact that those involved in the Struggle undoubtedly viewed Luthuli to be the leader of the liberation movement. In an interview in the early 1970s, Turok confirmed that Luthuli possessed the "charisma of the popular leader".¹⁹⁸ During the Treason Trial, tensions were often high and those

¹⁹⁶ *Star*, "Internationally Recognised: How Luthuli Heard News of the Nobel Prize Award", letter to the editor by Rev. Arthur Blaxall, 1960.

Publication Unknown, "Innate Strength of Character of Mr. Albert Lutuli", by Rev. Arthur Blaxall, 06 December 1961.

¹⁹⁷ University of the Western Cape (UWC), Robben Island Mayibuye Archives (RIMA), Brian Bunting Collection (MCH 07), 8.2.2.1, interview with Moses Kotane done in Moscow by Sonja Bunting, 01 October 1973, page 2 of interview questionnaire and page 9 of interview transcript.

While I do not doubt Luthuli and Kotane's closeness, Luthuli's statement about being a Communist, if ever said at all, must have been said in jest. Given their closeness, it is inconceivable that Kotane would have ever realistically believed Luthuli would 'convert' to Communism given his many years of consistent public personal rejection of it as a "mixture of a false theory of society linked on to a false 'religion'".

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 146.

¹⁹⁸ UWC, RIMA, MCH 07, 8.4.5, interview with Ben Turok conducted by Sonya Bunting, tape 1, typed transcript, October 1973, 1.

less secure tended to gravitate and follow those leaders who exhibited a sense of purpose and optimism. Those in custody formed a committee of about twenty chaired by Luthuli that organised and led various discussions in prison, lectures and seminars. Turok explained that within the Congress structure, particularly within the Joint Executives, “Chief Luthuli took the chair, and was the obvious leader”.¹⁹⁹ During the following years, as the inefficacy of the ANC’s militant non-violent tactics against the violent National Party regime proved apparent, Luthuli’s influence waned considerably and his capacity to lead diminished. After the banning of the ANC and after the government’s intransigent response to the May 1961 strike, one can question if Luthuli possessed substantive influence on the strategic way forward.

During the adjournment of the Trial in December 1957, charges against sixty-five of the accused were inexplicably dropped.²⁰⁰ Among those acquitted were Tambo and Luthuli. In August 1958, the Treason Trial proper began with ninety-one of the remaining accused on trial.²⁰¹ After an adjournment and reconvening under a revised indictment in January 1959, only thirty accused remained.²⁰² Yet, throughout the Trial until 29 March 1961, Luthuli often had to provide testimony and thus was always indirectly on trial.

Assaulted

After the July 1956 expiry of Luthuli’s second ban, his arrest and release from prison in December 1956 and his acquittal from the Treason Trial in December 1957, Luthuli experienced a welcome reprieve from any restrictions on his movement or company. On 15 April (Africa Day), large demonstrations occurred commemorating the 1958 Accra Conference of Independent African States. On this day, Luthuli addressed a large crowd in Durban that carried him shoulder high out of the venue. Luthuli proceeded from Durban to Ladysmith where he addressed another dense

I feel that Bunting, in order to elevate Kotane’s influence at the expense of Luthuli and Matthews, disingenuously adds that Luthuli and Matthews “assumed their leadership role almost as of right...” to Turok’s statement in an interview.

Brian Bunting, *Moses Kotane: South African Revolutionary: A Political Biography* (London: Inkululeko, 1975), 226.

¹⁹⁹ UWC, RIMA, MCH 07, 8.4.5, interview with Ben Turok, typed transcript, October 1973, 3.

²⁰⁰ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 235.

“The Legacy of Luthuli” incorrectly stated 26 June 1957.

²⁰¹ Ben Turok, *Nothing But the Truth: Behind the ANC’s Struggle Politics* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2003), 73.

²⁰² Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 274.

gathering. Luthuli began to intentionally court white audiences. In April 1958, Luthuli wrote an open letter to white voters inviting them to better understand the aims and objectives of the ANC. The Congress of Democrats (COD) organised a 'Whites only' audience in Johannesburg "to enable Europeans to hear Chief Luthuli speak".²⁰³ Luthuli entitled his speech "Our Vision Is a Democratic Society".²⁰⁴ Contained within this speech is arguably Luthuli's most prophetic statement:

But I personally believe that here in South Africa, with all our diversities of colour and race, we will show the world a new pattern for democracy. I think there is a challenge to us in South Africa to set a new example to the world. Let us not side-step that task.²⁰⁵

Luthuli ended his speech on an eschatological note:

There is in the Bible a verse which says that all those who are cowards, all those who grow apathetic because of the difficulties before them and run away from the struggle – that they shall not be able to reach that glorious place. It also says that the cowards be together with the evildoers.²⁰⁶

Over three hundred people present expressed great appreciation for the views and sentiments Luthuli put forward.²⁰⁷ No doubt much to the chagrin of the Africanists, Luthuli also accepted an invitation from the Transvaal Liberal Party to open its conference and speak to more Whites who needed convincing at its conference.²⁰⁸ An incident infrequently recalled displayed Luthuli's example of non-violent and interracial reconciliation despite violent provocation occurred in Pretoria at the St. Alban's Hall on 22 August 1958.²⁰⁹ On this day, Luthuli addressed an interracial gathering initiated by the predominately Afrikaner Pretoria Political Study Group.

²⁰³ UCT, MAD, LC, Thornton Collection (BC 930), ANC (A5), Albert Luthuli, "'Freedom Is the Apex': Chief A. Luthuli Speaks to White South Africans", SA Congress of Democrats, Johannesburg, 1958, preface.

²⁰⁴ Some sources (above) entitle the speech, "Freedom Is the Apex".

²⁰⁵ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 126. Also found in: Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 456-463.

²⁰⁶ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 129.

Excerpt from a section of Luthuli's speech entitled, "Go Forward in Faith".

²⁰⁷ UCT, MAD, LC, BC 930, A5, Albert Luthuli, "'Freedom Is the Apex': Chief A. Luthuli Speaks to White South Africans", SA Congress of Democrats, Johannesburg, 1958, preface.

²⁰⁸ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 209.

²⁰⁹ Luthuli and Charles Hooper are incorrect when they stated in Luthuli's autobiography that the incident occurred "during the early months of 1959". Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 209.

Six Afrikaner men invaded and violently disturbed the forum.²¹⁰ Diplomats, press correspondents from abroad, social study workers from Britain, clergy and professors and lecturers from two universities attended the event and witnessed the coordinated mêlée.²¹¹ The hooligans beat and injured many people, including Luthuli. The hooligans espoused that a “Kaffir” should not address Whites; for such to happen insulted the Afrikaner people.²¹² An assailant knocked Luthuli off his chair and assaulted him. While Luthuli hid underneath the table, the defendant repeatedly kicked him as he tried desperately to shield himself.²¹³ Luthuli received numerous blows to the face and could not eat for three days as a result of the injuries to his jaw.²¹⁴ The defendants also attacked the Secretary of the study group, Miss M. Schoon. Schoon became injured as she was thrown from the stage, “turned a cartwheel in the air and landed on the floor of the hall”.²¹⁵ Police finally arrived, quelled the disturbance and arrested the interlopers. With others, the Chairperson restrained Hendrik Claassens, the ringleader of the antagonists, and resumed the meeting, “speaking with a bruise over his forehead and covered with dust”.²¹⁶

Luthuli intended to speak on the theme of racial reconciliation and a peaceful South Africa. Though just brutally beaten, he delivered his prepared speech and theme, unaltered. The *Cape Times* reported:

Speaking fluently from his notes in a school exercise book, Chief Luthuli said that the Europeans had been sent to Africa by divine purpose to help educate and civilise Blacks. The African was however, becoming confused when he found his helpers were taking advantage of him and exploiting him...The sands of time are running out and our amity might change to enmity – I pray God that it doesn’t”.²¹⁷

Also incorrect is an article about Peter Corbett and Charlotte Owen’s 1993 documentary “Mayibuye Afrika”. The documentary and subsequent article cited Luthuli’s autobiography.

Sunday Tribune, “The Chief’s Voice Is Heard Again”, by Ingrid Shelvin, 18 July 1993, 3.

²¹⁰ Ten Indians and Luthuli, qualified the event as ‘interracial’. Though interracial, the Indians were segregated and stood in the back.

²¹¹ *Cape Argus*, “Luthuli Kicked, Chairs Thrown at Meeting”, 10 October 1958.

²¹² *Star*, “Court Told about How Chief Luthuli Was Hit”, 22 October 1958.

²¹³ This 1958 assault would be the first of two assaults. Luthuli would later be assaulted in custody subsequent to his arrest in 1960.

²¹⁴ *Star*, “Chief Luthuli Gives Evidence: Under Table – But I Felt Kicks”, 27 October 1958.

²¹⁵ *Rand Daily Mail*, “She Did Cartwheel When Hit – Witness”, 28 October 1958.

²¹⁶ *Cape Times*, “Riot at A. N. C. Meeting – Roughs Kick Women, Assault Luthuli”, 22 August 1958.

²¹⁷ *Cape Times*, “Riot at A. N. C. Meeting – Roughs Kick Women, Assault Luthuli”, 22 August 1958.

The South African Bureau of Racial Affairs strongly deplored the actions of the men.²¹⁸ The Public Attorney instructed that the six men be charged with public violence and appear in the Pretoria Magistrate's and Regional Court. The men who assaulted Luthuli were "found guilty and duly sentenced".²¹⁹ The incident underscored the degree to which Luthuli desired his life to be a demonstration of how to resist injustice and of South Africa's bright possibilities. Luthuli's comments after the incident as reported in the *Cape Times* also revealed his increasing frustration at white supremacists for making his non-violent tactics increasingly questioned by others in the liberation movement. Despite the beating, Luthuli reflected positively on the violent incident, noting that he saw a glimmer of hope and encouragement provided by the genuine support and willingness of Whites to listen to his message. Though the times seemed desperate and even though assaulted, for Luthuli, the non-violent road did not lead to a *cul-de-sac*.

Exclusive African Nationalism vs. Inclusive South African Nationalism

The year and half between Luthuli's acquittal and his third ban contained some of the most tumultuous events in the ANC's history. The most notable event was the breakaway of the ANC's nationalist camp to form the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Disgruntled about a perceived Communist influence, the prominence of multi-racialism in ANC tactics and the Freedom Charter as evidence of both, the Africanists withdrew from the Transvaal ANC conference in Orlando and formed their own party on 04-06 April 1959.²²⁰ The members of the PAC elected Robert Sobukwe and Potlako Leballo to lead as President and Secretary, respectively. The Africanists' platform harkened back to the ANCYL catalysed 1949 Programme of Action inspired by Nkrumah's nascent liberation tactics. Ghana's independence in

²¹⁸ *Star*, "A Disgrace to South Africa", 30 August 1958.

²¹⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 209.

Claassens' sentence was "a fine of £100 or four months imprisonment and an additional three months imprisonment".

Star, "Luthuli's Case: Claassens' Appeals against Conviction", 03 November 1959.

Corbett and Owen interviewed Claassens for their 1993 documentary. Ownes found Claassens a "lonely, old man". Corbett indicated that he had the impression that Claassens felt no remorse for his actions against Luthuli. "We are talking about an admirer of Robby Leibbrandt. My impression was that his only regret was having to go to prison for what he did".

UHOA, "Mayibuye Afrika".

Sunday Tribune, "The Chief's Voice Is Heard Again", by Ingrid Shevlin, 18 July 1993, 3.

²²⁰ Morris and Linnegar, *Every Step of the Way*, 175.

1957 and the rapid succession of African countries obtaining independence from that time fuelled the Africanists' passions for more radical stances to be taken by the ANC. The PAC's pan-African ideology, symbolised by its own flag, a star's light spreading to the rest of the continent from Ghana, enabled the new party to be attractive to, for example, Ghana's Nkrumah and Tanzania's Nyerere. The Africanists founded their ideology and tactics on the ANC's 1949 Programme of Action. The PAC viewed the Freedom Charter to be a betrayal of the cause. Because PAC members demonstrated, on the whole, impatience and militancy, many characterised them to be less disciplined, more impassioned and more spontaneous. More importantly, they wished to carry out the struggle for liberation without Whites, Coloureds or Indians.

The 'Old Guard' of the ANC, epitomised by Luthuli and Matthews, subscribed to what is termed 'South African exceptionalism'.²²¹ 'South African exceptionalism' comprehended South Africa to be a unique African country because it harboured settler, rather than administrative, colonialists. Settlers became grafted, and thus inseparable, to South Africa. The liberation movement in South Africa could not follow, or possibly could not even identify with, the rest of the African continent whose colonial overlords would simply retreat to the metropole. The Freedom Charter's opening words, "... (t)hat South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white" espoused this exceptionalism. Africanists deemed such a declaration political heresy.²²² Though Luthuli sympathised with certain aspects of the Africanists' perspective, such as their emphasis on individual rights (non-racialism) rather than multiracialism, concern over Communist influence and the need for radical land reform, he could not sacrifice what he felt was of prime importance: racial unity in the struggle against Apartheid.²²³

Luthuli as leader of the ANC did not see himself as an individual beacon by which the destiny of the ANC would follow, he did not understand himself to be the trailblazer from whose cult of personality the liberation movement would receive

²²¹ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 321.

²²² Moris and Linnegar, *Every Step of the Way*, 173.

²²³ While Luthuli may have been very consistent with his political perspectives, he was not always consistent in his terminology. For example, in his Presidential address to the ANC at its 46th Annual Conference, Luthuli repeatedly advocates the creation of a "Multi-Racial Society", "multi-racial country", and a "multi-racial South Africa" while simultaneously describing the those entities as distinctly 'non-racial' and "colour blind".

UCT, MAD, LC, BC 930, A5, Albert Luthuli, Presidential Address to the 46th Annual Conference of the ANC, 13-14 December 1958, 6-7.

directives nor did he conceive of himself as one to marginalise opinions at variance with his own so as to homogenise policy according to his perspective. Rather, Luthuli conceived himself to be a linchpin holding the liberation movement together. He held together modern and traditional, old and young, Black and White, conservative and liberal, capitalist and Communist, educated and uneducated, atheist and Christian, Muslim and Jew and rich and poor. Luthuli gauged the unity of the movement to be of paramount importance. He often suppressed his own sentiments on strategic issues, provided that suppression did not compromise fundamental aspirations of complete liberation of South Africa's oppressed, so that the centre held. Luthuli accepted the Freedom Charter despite qualms. He included the Africanist position, provided it did not divide the movement. When the Africanists could simply no longer be accommodated due to their highly aggressive and fractious natures, Luthuli's response was to reluctantly let them go. After Sharpeville, the banning of the PAC and the ANC in March 1960 forced both movements north into the continent; they became competitors for independent countries' succour. The more militant members of the ANC thus adopted aspects of the Africanist position (pan-Africanism, Blacks' control of the liberation movement and a willingness to utilise violence).

The year 1958 ended with the 46th Annual Conference of the ANC held in Durban from 13-14 December whereat the membership without opposition re-elected Luthuli President-General for a third term with Oliver Tambo as Deputy President-General and Nokwe as General-Secretary. In his presidential address, Luthuli did not refer specifically to the Africanist breakaway but rather alluded to and confirmed the ANC's policy of mobilising a "democratic majority" rather than a "racial majority" to govern the country.²²⁴ Luthuli's speech emphasised the nature of 'civilisation' that that he understood to be a synthesis of the best all cultures have to offer. Also, albeit in a perfunctory manner, Luthuli reminded his audience of the non-violent methods of struggle. Luthuli's 1958 speech primarily concentrated on his increasing optimism in fair-minded Whites and their ability to join the struggle thus providing an impetus for the overthrow of the National Party government. In 1959, Luthuli increasingly articulated his belief that the white minority would ultimately surrender to constructive pressure given their default rationality and malleability to moral

²²⁴ UCT, MAD, LC, BC 930, A5, Albert Luthuli, Presidential Address to the 46th Annual Conference of the ANC, 13-14 December 1958, 7.

persuasion. Four times in his speech Luthuli expressed that “the manner in which freedom lovers in the white community have come out openly and boldly to champion the cause of making the Union a true democracy for all...” encouraged him.²²⁵

Bantustans

In January 1959, Prime Minister Verwoerd announced to parliament his plans to initiate what were to become ‘Bantustans’ in the passage of the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act (No. 46).²²⁶ This Act greatly reversed the natural and progressive dying out of the institution of chieftainship that Luthuli welcomed.²²⁷ Though the aim of this investigation does not allow an in-depth exploration of the progressive legislative development of the bantustan framework, a cursory and elementary understanding of its evolution assists in explaining Luthuli’s objection to it based on his philosophical understanding of civilisation and political understanding of democracy.

The National Party government designed territorial constructs called ‘bantustans’ during the latter half of the 1950s, beginning with the 1956 Tomlinson Commission, to achieve various economic, social and political objectives necessitated by numerous contradictions arising from Apartheid ideology that was premised on racial ‘separation’. The Tomlinson Commission concluded:

There is no midway between the two poles of ultimate total integration and ultimate separate development of the two [racial] groups...[hence] sustained development of the Bantu Areas on a large scale [was] the germinal point.²²⁸

The envisioned apex of a bantustan framework was the perceived, but not actual, ‘independence’ for black ethnic groups within designated ‘homelands’ with both the ethnic groups and homelands being ideological constructs. Apartheid engineered white supremacy, that is, white economic, political, social and economic dominance.

²²⁵ UCT, MAD, LC, BC 930, A5, Albert Luthuli, Presidential Address to the 46th Annual Conference of the ANC, 13-14 December 1958, 2 (also 1, 4 and 9).

²²⁶ This act essentially extended the objectives of the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act.

²²⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 129.

²²⁸ *Summary Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa*, U. G. 61-1955 (Tomlinson Commission). Cited by: William Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 161.

In a report submitted to the Natal People's Conference on 06 September 1959, Luthuli lamented that the bantustan framework would throw off the land 60% to 70% of the peasants without providing them with any new sources of employment, re-allocate land to peasant farmers with no prospect of a peasant making a gross income of over £120 a year at the very most, render millions of Africans in white areas (towns and farms) stateless and rightless, fraudulently put forward a so-called partition of South Africa that nobody wanted and institute a system of tribal rule that made African chiefs, contrary to tradition, autocrats and virtually nothing more than instruments of their people's oppression. Luthuli questioned:

In honesty, can it be said that such a bantustan is in our interest? What is morally wrong in principle cannot be right in practice! So all Apartheid laws based as they are on the maxim: "Separate and unequal" in favour of the Whites can never be in the interests of the non-Whites.²²⁹

The 1959 Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act prepared a legislative path for the inauguration in Eshowe of Zululand's first Bantu Regional Authority (Inkanyezi) in October 1959, a significant milestone in the building of the bantustan framework. Immediately preceding this event, Luthuli published in earnest his grave concerns. Luthuli wrote twenty-seven columns for the Johannesburg based *Golden City Post* (the *Post*) during 1959. Six articles, all written in September and October, dealt directly with his opposition to the creation of bantustans. In a 20 September 1959 column, Luthuli quoted Paramount Chief Sabata Dalindyebo of the *Abatembu* in the Transkei who had already reluctantly accepted the framework as saying, "Half-a-loaf is better than no bread. Before, we had nothing. Now at least we have something". Luthuli responded to Dalindyebo with a number of socio-economic rebuttals posed as rhetorical questions. Luthuli vociferously opposed Chief Dalindyebo's line of thinking. Luthuli concluded:

Much of our destiny as a people in a scientific age has been placed by the white government in the hands of chiefs and their councillors. *The progress of Bantustans will not be judged on the affluence of a few; chiefs, traders, civil servants and professional people who are hardly*

²²⁹ LM, Albert Luthuli, "An Examination and Appraisal of the Political Import of the African Woman's Demonstration in Natal", a report for the Natal People's Conference on 06 September 1959 in Durban (Bantu Social Centre), drafted 31 August 1959, 4-5.

12 percent of the people. What will matter more is the raising of the general standard of living of the masses of the people to progressively approach civilised standards of living (Luthuli's emphasis).²³⁰

Throughout October 1959, a plethora of articles against the homelands scheme, such as "Bantustans Plan Is Not for Us", "Another Dead End of Apartheid", "'Back-To-Tribalism' Is Unrealistic", continued to be published; all of them reiterated Luthuli's disgust for the framework.²³¹ Luthuli's vitriol, uncharacteristic of his style, articulated that the plan for separate development was fundamentally flawed and exhibited the passion in which he opposed participation in the framework. Luthuli clamoured:

AFRICANS SHOULD CATEGORICALLY REJECT THE BANTUSTANS PROPOSALS BECAUSE: they purport to meet our demand for direct participation in the government of the country by some pseudo plan of self-government which is falsely acclaimed by the government as conforming to the traditional form of government in African society...(Luthuli's emphasis).²³²

Though Luthuli opposed the bantustan framework on economic, social and political grounds, it is the theological grounds upon which Luthuli objected that can not be underappreciated. In a correspondence to Lavinia Scott, Luthuli condemned the government's lauding of tribalism. Luthuli did not shy from expressing that the practice of tribalism was "unfortunately an embodiment of our traditional culture". Luthuli acknowledged that traditional African culture had some basically good ethical and moral concepts. However, Luthuli appraised that tribalism is in its fuller manifestation to be, "*in practice heathen*" (Rich's and therefore Luthuli's emphasis).²³³ Luthuli continued to write to Scott asking:

How then could those of us who so value the Christian way of life and would like to see AFRICANS and AFRICA become true heirs of the

²³⁰ BAPA, LF, Albert Luthuli, *Golden City Post*, "Answer These Posers, Bantustan Supporters", 20 September 1959, 6.

²³¹ BAPA, LF, Albert Luthuli, *Golden City Post*, "Bantustans Plan Is Not for Us!", 04 October 1959, 6. BAPA, LF, Albert Luthuli, *Golden City Post*, "Another Dead End of Apartheid", 11 October 1959, 6. BAPA, LF, Albert Luthuli, *Golden City Post*, "'Back to Tribalism' Is Unrealistic", 18 October 1959, 7. BAPA, LF, Albert Luthuli, *Golden City Post*, "The People Won't Gulp This Bait", 22 November 1959.

²³² BAPA, LF, Albert Luthuli, *Golden City Post*, "Bantustans Plan Is Not for Us", 04 October 1959, 6.

²³³ Rich, "Albert Luthuli", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 202. Rich cited: American Board Mission A/2/13, correspondence from Luthuli to Scott, 06 July 1953.

Christian heritage so that with the best in their culture they could be enabled to make a noble contribution to true Christian civilisation not resist to the utmost this diversion of the African to a dangerous secular stream – heathenism? (Rich’s and therefore Luthuli’s emphasis)²³⁴

Courting Whites

Throughout 1958 and halfway into 1959, while parliament passed legislation such as the euphemistically named Extension of University Education Act, Luthuli remained openly active as the leader of the ANC. In keeping with the ANC’s non-violent methods, Luthuli pressed for economic boycotts to be implemented. Demonstrating his militancy, Luthuli utilised vivid imagery to emphasise the impact of non-violent methods, stating that economic boycotts would “punch them in the stomach”.²³⁵ For example, a campaign began in February that boycotted cigarettes produced by Rembrandt, a company that supported the National Party.

In his autobiography, Luthuli indicated that during 1959 he “primarily” spoke to white audiences.²³⁶ Luthuli confided that he only “managed to fit some profitable Congress work as well”.²³⁷ Prior to his banning, Cape Town received Luthuli rapturously. Luthuli met with the Archbishop of Cape Town, Joost de Blank, former Chief Justice Albert van de Sandt Centlivres and Senator Leslie Rubin.²³⁸ One correspondent reported:

Luthuli’s recent visit to Cape Town...was an astonishing affair. He stepped off the Orange Express at Cape Town station to be greeted by cheering supporters waiting to garland him. His meeting in the Drill Hall that evening was one of the biggest of its kind ever seen in the Mother City. The next four days went past in a flurry: Press conferences, a house party with liberals, clergymen, and prominent citizens waiting to shake his hand, a private talk with Black Sash women, an ‘inspection’ of the demonstration outside Parliament against the university apartheid bill.²³⁹

²³⁴ Rich, “Albert Luthuli”, in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 202. Rich cited: American Board Mission A/2/13, correspondence from Luthuli to Scott, 06 July 1953.

²³⁵ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 292. See endnote 69, 367. Karis and Carter cited: “Report of the National Anti-Pass Council”, signed by Duma Nokwe, Secretary General of the ANC, submitted to the “Mass National Conference” of 30 May 1959.

²³⁶ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 210.

²³⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 210.

²³⁸ By 1959, Luthuli had written contact with Senator Rubin for many years.

UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP (BCZA 78/46-47), CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, correspondence from Luthuli to Leslie Rubin, 24 May 1956, 1.

²³⁹ *Forum*, “Ex-Chief Luthuli’s Influence on White Opinion”, July 1959, 12.

One can not underestimate the tide of popularity Luthuli rode at this time. Multi-racial crowds shouted and sang “*Somlandela Luthuli!*” (“We will follow Luthuli!”). “While Luthuli talked, nobody moved”.²⁴⁰ The National Party regime observed that Luthuli’s moderate realism that mobilised Blacks as well as Whites, Coloureds and Indians could be far more dangerous than Sobukwe’s radical black nationalism. A letter to the editor submitted to the *Rand Daily Mail* by Jack Lewsen conveyed the degree to which Luthuli’s non-threatening stance threatened the ruling government.²⁴¹

In banning ex-Chief Luthuli, there is no doubt that Minister Swart is endeavouring to halt Luthuli’s increasing anti-apartheid influence on white political opinion in the Union. The level-headed and unemotional attitudes of ex-Chief Luthuli have made a broad impression upon Whites of all political affinities, and it is most significant that the speeches and statements of new adherents of the ‘intellectual rebellion’ against the Nationalist (sic) Party’s bantustan policies have one feature in common, namely: unmasked contempt for the ineffectual policies of the official white Opposition Party, coupled with a faith and hope in the sanity of African opposition to Apartheid. I know of no African exponent of racial justice and liberalism who is better equipped than ex-Chief Luthuli in status and intellectual and moral integrity to counter the appealing influences of rabid African extremism. By removing the calm lawful political influence of ex-Chief Luthuli, Minister Swart has done the greatest possible disservice to white South Africans.²⁴²

This immense popularity outside the black community made Luthuli a viable Head of State and the ANC a realistic ruling party just as thirty years later Mandela’s magnetism and moderate tone with progressive Whites enabled him to take the reins of power without the need of a civil war.²⁴³ At the close of the 1950s in an atmosphere bedevilled by fear and mistrust, only Luthuli captured the imagination and harnessed the hope of many Whites and Blacks in South Africa by instilling confidence and trust. Only Luthuli elicited substantial doses of white sympathy,

²⁴⁰ *Drum*, “Cape Town Goes Thumbs Up in a Terrific Welcome to Luthuli!”, by Kenneth Mackenzie, June 1959, 25.

²⁴¹ Jack Lewsen was an advocate, a former United Party member of the Johannesburg City Council and member of the Liberal Party.

²⁴² *Forum*, “Ex-Chief Luthuli’s Influence on White Opinion”, July 1959, 12-3.

²⁴³ Albert Luthuli, “If I Were Prime Minister”, in *The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross: South African Studies* (London: Publicity and Information Bureau of the African National Congress, n.d.), 3: 73-82. Extracted from an exclusive article published in *Ebony*, Chicago, February 1962.

affection and even adoration. Luthuli explained why he intentionally sought to speak to white audiences.

I felt encouraged by the responses of the Europeans whom I was able to speak to. I think they came with more than curiosity in their minds. They seemed to have a real sense of purpose, and a real desire to face and to discuss the issues. Their ignorance was often disturbing – but I must make this partial extenuation for them: it is more and more a government enforced ignorance.²⁴⁴

Where other younger black leaders saw a cul-de-sac in 1961, Luthuli observed for himself a groundswell building for a free and fully-democratic South Africa, not only within the black community, but perhaps more importantly for Luthuli, also within the white liberal community and among Afrikaner intellectuals. Yes, the National Party regime behaved belligerently and obstinately. But, a resolved liberal white community could, in Luthuli's view, with a militant non-violent black majority, constitutionally overwhelm the supporters of Apartheid. Yes, something was needed to inspire and galvanise sympathetic Whites to choose democracy – like the Nobel Peace Prize. Sadly, for Luthuli, that pivotal accolade catalysed very little of what he thought to be possible. Mandela set off the bombs the day after Luthuli returned from Oslo, creating little hope for any non-violent revolution for over thirty years.

Third Ban

On 25 May 1959, seventeen months since his acquittal, the government served Luthuli his third banning order. Luthuli made good use of the hiatus before the ban. Of course, Luthuli's 'productive' use of his time led to the end of the reprieve. The timing of Luthuli's banning prevented him from being present at and opening a large ANC conference in Johannesburg on 31 May. The government did not necessarily serve the banning order to prevent Luthuli from travelling to ANC branches or addressing Congresses' conferences. More importantly, the government served the banning order because Luthuli persuaded Whites, and many of them. Luthuli's extensive exposure to and his almost celebrity status among like-minded Whites in South Africa, explains in part why Luthuli could not break with the policy of non-

²⁴⁴ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 209.

violence as a war would inevitably destroy his aspiration of peaceful co-existence between the races. Luthuli's colleagues such as Mandela, Tambo, Sisulu and other prominent Blacks did not have the same mass exposure to Whites as he did. In keeping with the progressively harsher nature of each succeeding ban, the 1959 ban prevented Luthuli from attending any meeting anywhere in South Africa and confined him to the Lower Tugela District for five years.²⁴⁵ Many groups, especially the Liberal Party and the COD protested Luthuli's harsh banning restrictions.²⁴⁶ During a Congregational Members' Meeting, the Musgrave church resolved to issue a statement that urged the Minister of Justice to reconsider Luthuli's ban. The statement, published in the press, proclaimed that the government, and not Luthuli, destroyed "civil rights and liberties of freedom of speech and conscience", the "bulwarks of our civilisation". Furthermore, the Congregational church stated:

We believe that there is no more ardent or sincere upholder of the Christian ideals of brotherly love and the dignity of man than Mr. Luthuli.²⁴⁷

Luthuli spent the ten day interregnum, between his being served the ban on 25 May and 03 June when the geographical portion of it took effect, campaigning. Luthuli set off for Johannesburg for the last time sometime on or after 28 May, visiting Tambo, Congress members and, again, his "dear friend" the Bishop of Johannesburg. On 01 June a protest meeting took place at Gandhi Hall in Johannesburg to protest the banning of the ANC meeting scheduled the previous day. Despite his being in the area, Luthuli could not attend the meeting and a

²⁴⁵ *Star*, "Luthuli Ban Will Not Be Lifted, Says Swart", 02 June 1959.

²⁴⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Luthuli Ban Protest to be Allowed", 05 June 1959.

Star, "To Protest about Luthuli Ban", 11 June 1959.

Rand Daily Mail, "'Luthuli Ban' Meeting", 17 June 1959.

UW, WCL, Congress of Democrats (COD), AD 2187, H 48, Press Statement issued by P. Beyleveld, President of the South African Congress of Democrats, n.d.

UW, WCL, COD, AD 2187, H15, correspondence from Ben Turok to Luthuli, 12 June 1959.

UKZN, APC&SA, PC2/9/29/1, correspondence and attached "Resolution at a Public Meeting called by the Liberal Party in Stanger on Wednesday, 24 June 1959" from Ebrahim Mahomed, Secretary of the Liberal Party to C. R. Swart, Minister of Justice, 25 June 1959.

UKZN, APC&SA, PC2/9/29/1, "Report on Protest Meeting Banning of Chief Luthuli and Other Leaders", 25 June 1959.

UKZN, APC&SA, PC2/4/12/2, submission to *The Star* (unpublished, n.d.), *Golden City Post* (2 submissions, n.d.) and *Rand Daily Mail* (17 June 1959), "Luthuli Ban Protest Meeting".

²⁴⁷ Publication unknown, "Luthuli Ban Criticised by Church", 08 June 1959.

representative read his statement entitled "Freedom Costs Dearly". In it, Luthuli reminded his followers:

The degree to which we of this age are prepared to sacrifice for this freedom is the gauge of our earnestness and sincerity to secure it. It is also the measure of our fitness for it.²⁴⁸

Luthuli then flew to Durban on 02 June and began his domestic exile the day before the banning that confined him to Groutville took effect.²⁴⁹

A month into his ban, on Freedom Day, 26 June 1959, Luthuli issued a message calling for a boycott of potatoes to protest the use of 'slave labour' on South African farms.²⁵⁰ Luthuli and the ANC chose the boycott as a means of resisting white supremacy with non-violent methods. As written in his autobiography's postscript after August 1960, Luthuli remained convinced of the moral and tactical rightness of non-violent methods.

I make it clear that we mean to cling to methods such as this, to non-violence, and we mean increasingly to use these weapons even against such tyrants as South Africa's present government. This is not only a question of morality. As long as our patience can hold out, we shall not jeopardise the South Africa of tomorrow by precipitating violence today.²⁵¹

Lasting three months, the boycott protested pass laws that rendered thousands of men confined to 'Farm Gaols'.

²⁴⁸ UW, WCL, ANC, AD2186, Ga84, Albert Luthuli, "Freedom Costs Dearly", handwritten draft, 28 May 1959 at the Groutville Mission, Natal.

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 213.

²⁴⁹ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 293.

²⁵⁰ *Star*, "Luthuli Announces Start of Boycott", 26 June 1959.

Natal Witness, "Luthuli Launches ANC's Anti-Nat Boycott", 26 June 1959.

Rand Daily Mail, "Luthuli and Farm Labour Troubled the Nats", 18 June 1959.

LM, Moses Mabhida, Acting President of the Natal ANC, "Statement on the Potato Boycott", reports submitted to the Natal People's Conference on 06 September 1959, 8.

UKZN, APC&SA, no reference provided, correspondence from Peter Hjul to Peter Brown, 19 May 1959.

²⁵¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 218. See also:

Times, "African's Call for Non-Violence", 26 August 1959, 7.

A joint press release from Luthuli (ANC) and Peter Brown (Liberal Party) to the *Rand Daily Mail*, signed 20 February 1960 and released 01 March 1960.

UKZN, APC&SA, PC2/4/11/3. Found also at LM.

While banned to Groutville, Luthuli issued public statements following disturbances in June arising from spontaneous women's demonstrations. Luthuli denied that the ANC incited the disturbances and proclaimed its constructive role:

We have issued statements strongly advising people against violence. Violence is not only contrary to our policy, but most inimical to our liberation struggle.²⁵²

Luthuli remained quite active, through correspondence to Helen Joseph and others, by assisting in the organisation of the commemoration of "the third anniversary of the mass demonstration at the Union Building of South African women against the issuing of passes to African women in August 1959".²⁵³ In fact, Luthuli brashly claimed to the press, "Actually, I am more in touch with affairs than ever before, probably because I have a lot more time for my correspondence".²⁵⁴ Prolific letter writing facilitated much of Luthuli's work for the ANC.

The terms of his banning allowed Luthuli to receive visitors, as long as only one visited at a time so as to not constitute a 'gathering'. In September 1959, the American Ambassador visited Luthuli at his home. The visit of the Progressive Party's leader, Jan Steytler, buoyed Luthuli's hope for a peaceful transition to a democratic South Africa for it constituted a sign of a gradual white opposition to Apartheid.²⁵⁵ The year ended with the December 1959 ANC Conference in Durban at which Luthuli issued *in absentia* a presidential message to the movement. Luthuli advocated that more training be instituted to discipline the rank and file for non-violent action and warned against "reckless haste and impatience which would be suicidal and might be playing into the hands of the Government".²⁵⁶ It was at this

²⁵² *Star*, "Luthuli Denies A. N. C. Part in Disturbances", 25 August 1959.

²⁵³ UW, WCL, FSAW, AD 1137, Ae4.3, Cb1.5.3, Message by Albert Luthuli, "Women and the Freedom Struggle", 09 August 1959.

UW, WCL, FSAW, AD 1137, Ae 4.3, correspondence from Helen Joseph to Albert Luthuli, 28 July 1959.

²⁵⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Banished Chief Still in Touch with A. N. C.", 17 December 1959.

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 215.

²⁵⁵ Steytler and others resigned from the United Party over its increasingly conservative stance that made the Party, as Luthuli often noted, a mere caricature of the National Party.

²⁵⁶ Albert Luthuli, "The Presidential Address", 47th Annual ANC Conference, Durban, 12-13 December 1959. Found in:

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 296. See endnote 81, 368.

This was the last annual conference the ANC was to have in South Africa for over thirty years.

December conference that the ANC decided to coordinate an anti-pass campaign that would begin on 31 March 1960.

Conclusion

This chapter chronicled Luthuli's life from 1926 until the end of 1959 wherein Luthuli's ecclesiastic influences and associations instilled within him an appreciation for western democracy, multiracial cooperation and non-violence that catapulted him to the Presidency of the ANC. Luthuli's disappointing experiences with the Teachers' and Cane Growers' associations, the NRC, his chieftaincy and others' participation in the bantustan framework persuaded him that parochial (be they from Groutville or Africa) efforts would be insufficient to overthrow white supremacy in South Africa. Luthuli's experience with Congregationalists in the United States, Christian missionaries in the Natal Missionary Conference, Indians in the Defiance Campaign, and white liberals during his 1959 trip to Cape Town convinced him that support would be international, western, liberal and Christian in nature and that in order to maintain and increase solidarity, the moral high ground must not be ceded by implementing violence. Luthuli's leadership ensured that the ANC honoured its inclusive and democratic ethos. For example, the ANC ratified the Freedom Charter despite Luthuli's strong reservations. For the sake of unity, Luthuli yielded to the organisation's democratic decision. This event foreshadowed Luthuli's role in the July 1961 decision to form *MK*.

Chapter Three

I Place It on Record Here¹

Controversy over the role that Luthuli played in the formulation of the decision to set up the ANC's and SACP's armed wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*..., in 1961 had been going on for more than five years at the time of Luthuli's death. -- Jabulani Sithole and Sibongiseni Mkhize²

Introduction

This chapter examines the various means by which Luthuli's position on violence has been reversed and appropriated to serve the various agendas of nationalist leaders. Luthuli initially expressed anger at *MK*'s launch and thereafter did not speak in support of it. Early accounts alleged that Luthuli was unaware of the decision to form or launch *MK*. Mandela's 1994 autobiography changed this conception and later accounts (save Buthelezi) repeat Mandela's 1994 version that Luthuli participated in and supported the decision to form *MK*. Most importantly, this chapter discloses that the ANC only claimed *after* his death that Luthuli supported the turn to violence. Thereafter, the ANC selectively highlighted quotations from Luthuli's "The Road to Freedom" and Rivonia statements to anachronistically suggest that he supported the turn to violence in 1961. This chapter traces the evolution of myths concerning Luthuli that even extended to the manner in which he died, for an accidental death signified his benign political existence and a political assassination signified him as a threatening violent revolutionary.

¹ Luthuli followed the advice of his lawyers and did not issue a prepared statement following his sentence for burning his pass in 1960. He expressed doubt about the wisdom of his decision to not issue the statement. Instead, Luthuli included the statement in his autobiography saying, "I place it on record here and leave the reader to decide. Whether he applauds or derides, he will know how I feel". Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 242.

² Jabulani Sithole and Sibongiseni Mkhize, "Truth or Lies? Selective Memories, Imagings and Representations of Chief Albert John Luthuli in Recent Political Discourses", *History and Theory* 39, (December 2000), 72, see also footnote 13.

Myth-Making in Nationalist Narratives

During South Africa's first fifteen years of liberation and democracy, many of those who fought to create the new country wrote autobiographies chronicling their and others' roles in the struggle (Ahmed Kathrada, Nelson Mandela, Ismail Meer, Joe Slovo and Ronnie Kasrils).³ Likewise, many wrote biographies to recount the seminal role the 'founding fathers' played in the formation of 'a new example to the world' (Anthony Sampson and Mary Benson on Mandela, Elinor Sisulu on Walter Sisulu, Benjamin Pogrand on Robert Sobukwe, Steve Clingman on Bram Fischer, Luli Callinicos on Oliver Tambo, Piers McGrandle on Trevor Huddleston, Colleen Ryan on Beyers Naudé, Willem Saayman on Z. K. Matthews and Steve Gish and John Allen on Desmond Tutu).⁴ There is no biography written about Albert Luthuli.⁵ No author has

³ Ahmed Kathrada, *Memoirs* (Cape Town: Zebra, 2004).

Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*.

Ismail Meer, *Ismail Meer: A Fortunate Man* (Cape Town: Zebra, 2002).

Nelson Mandela wrote the forward, dated September 2001.

Joseph Slovo, *Slovo: An Unfinished Autobiography* (Randburg: Ravan, 1995).

Ronnie Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: From Undercover Struggle to Freedom*, rev. ed. (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2004).

⁴ Anthony Sampson, *Mandela: The Authorised Biography* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1999).

Mary Benson, *Nelson Mandela: The Man and the Movement*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1994).

Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*.

Nelson Mandela wrote the forward for this book.

Pogrand, Benjamin. *How Can a Man Die Better: The Life of Robert Sobukwe* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1997).

Stephen Clingman, *Bram Fischer: Afrikaner Revolutionary* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998).

Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*.

McGrandle, *Trevor Huddleston*.

Colleen Ryan, *Beyers Naudé: Pilgrimage of Faith* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow: The Life and Times of Professor ZK Matthews*.

Steven Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography* (Westport: Greenwood, 2004).

John Allen, *Rabble Rouser for Peace: An Authorised Biography of Desmond Tutu* (London: Rider Books, 2006).

⁵ Few historians have interpreted Luthuli's life. Though countless biographies have been written on other South African liberation icons, incredibly no one has written Luthuli's. In addition to an archival silence, a historiographical silence exists due to a lack of substantive historical writing on Luthuli. This study references the following exceptions: Edward Callan's *Albert John Luthuli and the South African Conflict* and Mary Benson's *Chief Albert Lutuli of South Africa* pre-date Luthuli's death and thus provided little retrospective contextual analysis. Neither author posited substantive arguments regarding Luthuli's stance on violence, though they both concluded he opposed its use (64-5, 51, respectively). Lyn Graybill's *Religion and Resistance* provided excellent analysis and also generically agreed Luthuli was non-violent but acknowledged he may have recognised the armed struggle elsewhere in Africa (37-8). This comparative work of the African National Congress (Luthuli), Pan African Congress (Sobukwe), Black Consciousness Movement (Biko) and United Democratic Front (Tutu) movements did not focus specifically on Luthuli. Gerald Pillay's first volume of *Voices of Liberation*, provided a brief biography

heeded Nelson Mandela's 1991 call for a "definitive" biography of Africa's first Nobel Peace Prize winner that would "be a useful addition to the sparse material" that existed then and still is insufficient today.⁶ Despite the fact that Luthuli led the ANC from 1952 until his death in 1967 and thus directed the freedom movement through many of the most dramatic chapters of South Africa's struggle for liberation that include the Defiance Campaign (1952), the Treason Trial (1956-1961) and Sharpeville (1960), no author has yet substantively chronicled his life story.⁷

History inspired by nationalism is a genre of literature predominant today that the public finds accessible, in terms of purchase and comprehensibility. Hence, nationalist inspired histories produce the bulk of the public's understanding of South Africa's past. Usually, these nationalist histories are biographic in nature or are history texts sponsored by a government instrumentality.⁸ Thula Simpson's dissertation provided this study with examples of 'nationalist' biographic works when he stated:

The memoirs of Rusty Bernstein, Ahmed Kathrada, Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki and Joe Slovo all belong to the sub-genre of accounts from the generation which initiated the ANC's move to armed struggle... They

and some commentary limited to contextualising Luthuli's speeches and statements yet generally affirmed Luthuli's non-violent stand (150). There have been some short works on Luthuli within other texts; most borrowed from or summarised Luthuli's autobiography. For example, Nadine Gordimer's "The Man Who Burned His Pass", in *Heroes of Our Time*, 85-94 and Alden Whitman's *The Obituary Book*, 121-4. These brief texts lacked historical analysis and can not be considered biographies. Paul Rich's "Albert Luthuli" in *Missions and Christianity*, Henry Bredekamp and Robert Ross, eds., is an excellent academic piece, but by no means a biography and its subject matter is limited to missiology. Beatrice Roberts wrote *Albert Luthuli* for secondary school learners by recycling Luthuli's autobiography *Let My People Go*. This study also references and analyses contemporary historical writings and interviews included in audio-visual documentaries featuring Sibusiso Ndebele, Jacob Zuma, Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Billy Nair and Kader Asmal who have been and are, for all intents and purposes, the primary interpreters of Luthuli's life in the context of the liberation struggle. These political icons repeatedly relate or imply that Luthuli supported the turn to violence in audio-visual documentaries such as "The Legacy of a Legend: Chief Albert J. M. Luthuli", produced by the National Film and Video Foundation and sponsored by the Department of Arts and Culture, aired on SABC, 2005 and "A Commemorative Tribute to Chief Albert Luthuli: 'Servant for the People'", produced by Rhubarb Post Productions and sponsored by the Office of the Premier of Kwazulu-Natal, 27 February 2007.

⁶ *Daily News*, "Nelson Mandela Would Like to See Definitive Biography of Chief Luthuli", 14 October 1991.

⁷ Due to the neglect of Luthuli, few in South Africa are familiar with him and his role in South Africa's history. In 2004, SABC3 ran a very unscientific survey of who South Africans thought were the top 100 Great South Africans. Luthuli ranked 41st in importance behind Nkosi Johnson, Gary Player, Hansie Cronje, Johnny Clegg, Leon Schuster and others. Obviously, the term "great" was heavily qualified. <http://www.answers.com/topic/sabc2-s-great-south-africans>, accessed 16 October 2008, 2.

⁸ Such as the Ministry of Education and the HSRC's *Every Step of the Way*, Morris and Linnegar.

all made the argument...Reverence for the wisdom, heroism, self-sacrifice, reconciliatory spirit and the prophetic vision of this senior generation became crucial pillars of the new patriotism which the ANC very consciously sought to cultivate...”⁹

In short, nationalist history, for right or for wrong, inaccurate or accurate, intentionally puts forward a particular ideological or ‘patriotic’ view of history.

The predominant asseveration by the current and recently deceased South African ‘political elite’ is that Luthuli supported the ANC’s decision to form *MK*, thus initiating the armed struggle as one method of achieving liberation.¹⁰ This genre of literature contrasts itself with many more scholarly contributions from Karis and Carter (1977), Reinertsen (1985), Pillay (1993), Graybill (1995), Sithole and Mkhize (2000) and, most recently, SADET (vol. 1, 2004) that generally conclude Luthuli never came to support the turn to violence. However, Simpson’s text alludes that even the most academically rigorous texts can be written with a nationalist bias. Commenting on the SADET work, Simpson stated:

An interesting place in the historiography of the liberation struggle is occupied by *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* project which was inaugurated in 2001 by the then South African President Thabo Mbeki. Mbeki identified two flaws with the existing state of historical writing on South Africa. The first was the aforementioned general paucity of the literature, and the second was the domination of the field by historians whom he characterised as hostile to the objectives of the liberation struggle. Mbeki called for “our struggle” to be written by “our historians” and the project was designed to serve this objective.¹¹

Kader Asmal, Jacob Zuma, Nelson Mandela, Billy Nair and Sibusiso Ndebele are the most prominent examples of those who avow that Luthuli decided upon and supported

⁹ Simpson, “‘Total Onslaught’ Reconsidered”, 8-9.

¹⁰ The Communist Party of South Africa initially considered Luthuli to be a part of the decision to initiate armed resistance with other more traditional (non-violent political) methods of struggle. The Party’s understanding changed with Brian Bunting’s biography on Kotane. Slovo is a good example of this lingering line of thought.

Sithole and Mkhize, “Truth or Lies”, 72-3, see footnotes 12, 17, 18 and 21.

Sithole and Mkhize cited: “Chief Albert Luthuli: A Tribute to the Late President General of the African National Congress”, in *South African Communists Speak* (London: South African Communist Party, 1981), 360.

¹¹ Simpson, “‘Total Onslaught’ Reconsidered”, 10.

the decision to initiate the armed struggle. Those who defend Luthuli's support of violence as a tactic are often motivated by nationalism and its resultant inclination to mould a cohesive, homogenous and sanitised natal history of a country celebrating its first fifteen years of liberation and democracy. This position is supported by those who serve or have served in positions of high political significance and who have a vested interest in moulding a particular historical memory.

Linked to the understanding that Luthuli supported armed resistance is a mistaken belief that the Apartheid regime assassinated him. The rationale behind the conviction is that if Luthuli fully supported the armed resistance and, in his role as President-General of the ANC, acted as 'a', if not, 'the' Commander-in-Chief, then the Apartheid regime was sufficiently motivated to orchestrate his death. This study proposes that because Luthuli's banning, on the one hand, and marginalisation from the ANC due to his non-support of the armed resistance, on the other hand, rendered him obsolete, the South African government did not view him as a threat sufficient enough to orchestrate his death. Contested are claims made without supportive evidence that the state murdered Luthuli. The characterisation of Luthuli's death as "mysterious" and the insinuation that his death involved foul-play are substantiated only by suspicions.

Bunting, Slovo and Benson's Claims

Sources such as Benson (1963), Karis and Carter (1977), Buthelezi (1982) written prior to Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995) alleged that Luthuli did not support the formation of a violent movement that would in time prosecute the struggle against Apartheid.¹² Some such as Bunting (1975), Benson (1986) and Slovo (1995) assert that not only did Luthuli oppose the decision, but he was not privy to its making due to his presumed opposition to it.¹³ Sithole and Mkhize's essay "Truth or Lies" surveyed the

¹² Callan, *Albert John Luthuli*, 51.

Benson, *Chief Albert Lutuli of South Africa*, 64-5.

¹³ Slovo's biography, though dated 1995, was obviously written before his death on 06 January 1995. Therefore, I consider him a pre-1995 source. Mandela wrote the forward to Slovo's book on 18 September 1995 (that is, after he wrote his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*). Mandela and the editors of Slovo's autobiography respected Slovo's version of events despite the fact that Mandela's autobiography did not agree with it.

historiography surrounding Luthuli's knowledge of the decision to form *MK* and compared how various political movements utilised and adapted memory to interpret to their advantage the ambiguities of historical events.¹⁴ Utilising Sithole and Mkhize's literature survey as a template, this study identifies the historiographic 'turn' whereby historical writings move from 'Luthuli's ignorance of and opposition to *MK*'s formation and launch' to 'Luthuli's awareness and support of *MK*'s formation and launch'.

Information from Bunting's biography of Moses Kotane (1975) indicated that Luthuli did not attend the ANC Executive meeting or the Congresses' Joint Executives meeting that decided to form *MK* in July 1961.

In fact, the formation of Umkhonto and its initial sabotage activity created an immediate problem in relation to the banned President-General of the ANC, Chief Lutuli, who had only that year been awarded the Nobel Prize for his services to peace. Lutuli was not involved in the discussions which led to the formation of Umkhonto. For one thing, he was living under restriction at Groutville and able to keep in touch with the ANC leadership in the Transvaal only intermittently. For another, during the crucial months of 1961 when the decision to set up Umkhonto was being formulated, Lutuli was preoccupied with arrangements in connection with his visit to Oslo to receive his Nobel award. A third factor was simply the reluctance of the ANC leadership to engage in a discussion which might result in a Presidential veto before it was necessary.¹⁵

Bunting continued, indicating that Luthuli strongly suspected the involvement of ANC members after the media reported the sabotage acts. Luthuli demanded an explanation. The ANC headquarters delegated prominent ANC leaders, one after the other, to liaise. No one satisfactorily explained the situation to Luthuli. Finally, Luthuli summoned Kotane. In defiance of his banning order, Kotane travelled to Groutville to meet Luthuli. The two huddled in a sugar cane field and clarified matters. According to Bunting, Luthuli told Kotane that he would not advocate the use of violence to any member of the

Meer's biography of Mandela does not chronicle the July 1961 decision to form *MK* or Mandela's January 1962 "disconcerting conversation" with Luthuli following the launch of *MK*. Meer only related in her chronology that after the formation of *MK*, "The President-General of the ANC, Chief Luthuli, remains opposed to violence. He is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize a week before the first explosion".

Fatima Meer, *Higher Than Hope: 'Rolihlahla We Love You': Nelson Mandela's Biography on His 70th Birthday* (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1988), 323.

¹⁴ Sithole and Mkhize, "Truth or Lies?", 72-3.

¹⁵ Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 268.

ANC. Yet, Luthuli confided that he would not forbid or condemn the acts of sabotage for it was the ultimately the government's fault. Nonetheless, Bunting related that Luthuli felt the question of sabotage should have been discussed by the ANC through the "usual channels", and said: "When my son decides to sleep with a girl, he does not ask for my permission, but just does it. It is only afterwards, when the girl is pregnant and the parents make a case, that he brings his troubles home".¹⁶

All three explanations given by Bunting for Luthuli's ignorance of the decision to form *MK* are very problematic.¹⁷ First, as chapter five narrates in detail, the July 1961 meeting in which the ANC and the Congresses Alliance decided to form *MK* occurred near Groutville, in Stanger, so Luthuli's restriction in the Lower Tugela region did not prohibit these clandestine meetings in which many of the ANC's Transvaal based leadership participated. Second, the announcement that Luthuli won the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize did not occur until October 1961. For this reason, Luthuli's preoccupation with arrangements to travel to Norway did not prohibit his presence at or knowledge of the July meetings. Third, given the democratic ethos of the ANC and Luthuli, "a Presidential veto" did not exist. Mandela and others expected opposition from Luthuli who possessed great influence, but he had no veto power over a democratic decision. Only by reason and moral authority could Luthuli persuade the ANC and the Congresses not to form *MK*. Therefore, concerning Luthuli's participation in the decision to form *MK*, Kotane's testimony through Bunting is inaccurate.

Slovo also contended that Luthuli did not know of the decision to form *MK*. Slovo wrote in his autobiography:

Indeed, that grand old man of the ANC, Chief Albert Luthuli, whose presidential leadership had made immeasurable contribution to the radical struggle of the 1950s, was not a party to the decision, nor was he ever to endorse it. It was a measure of his greatness that despite his deep Christian conviction to non-violence, he never forbade or condemned the

¹⁶ Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 269.

¹⁷ How Bunting, whose source is assumed to be Kotane, concluded incorrectly that Luthuli did not know the ANC discussed the "question of sabotage" is a mystery. In chapter five, I explain that it was not "the question of sabotage [that] should have been discussed through usual channels", that distressed Luthuli but rather he felt *MK*'s launch and launch date should have been discussed through usual channels.

new path, blaming it on the regime's intransigence rather than on those who created MK.¹⁸

In her biography of Mandela (1986), Benson provided no detail as to how the ANC and the Congresses decided to form MK. Hence, Benson did not address whether Luthuli knew of or participated in the decision to form MK.¹⁹ Nevertheless, informed by Masabalala Yengwa, Benson implied that Luthuli was unaware of the policy decision to form and the tactical decision to launch MK.²⁰

...Lutuli raised the question which had long troubled him: Umkhonto's announcement in December 1961 that the policy of non-violence had ended. Aware of Mandela's role, Lutuli criticised the failure to consult [him] and the ANC 'grassroots'. He felt they had been compromised. Although apologetic, Mandela said he thought that, tactically, the action had been correct. Besides, they had wanted to protect Lutuli and the ANC from involvement in the drastic change in policy.²¹

But, as chapter five highlights, Yengwa's unpublished autobiographical manuscript indicated that as a result of Luthuli's banning order, the ANC called the full National Executive Committee together in secret at his magisterial district so that he could attend.²² Hence, Benson's understanding of Luthuli's ignorance was also not accurate.

In contrast to Bunting, Slovo and Benson's texts, Elinor Sisulu's book *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime* reported Luthuli's involvement in and knowledge of the decision to form MK.²³ Yet, in agreement with the above texts, Sisulu's text affirmed Luthuli's ignorance of and embarrassment by the timing of MK's launch:

¹⁸ Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 147.

¹⁹ Benson, *Nelson Mandela*, 106.

²⁰ Benson did not cite a source.

²¹ Benson, *Nelson Mandela*, 116.

Yengwa's rendition of the meeting, through Benson, differs from Mandela's version presented in his autobiography in timing and content. First, chapter six conveys that Benson chronologically placed this meeting and conversation after Mandela's trip to North Africa (prior to his arrest in Howick) rather than immediately before he departed in January 1962. Second, Mandela's discussion with Luthuli following his tour of Africa did not focus on the issue of violence but rather the degree to which newly independent African countries identified and sympathised with the ANC's cooperation with non-Blacks.

²² LM, MYP, Masabalala Yengwa's unpublished autobiographical manuscript, 106.

²³ Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 146.

At a meeting to review the launch of *MK*, Chief Albert Luthuli was clearly embarrassed about the timing [of the launch] and unhappy about the apparent recklessness that led to the casualties.²⁴

All texts called into question that Luthuli had foreknowledge of the armed struggle's activation and launch date.

A consensus existed that Luthuli refrained from speaking-out against the very policy adopted by the same organisation he led as President-General as a consequence of his banning, the lack of efficacious alternative strategies, his obedience to decisions borne out of the ANC's consensus-seeking polity and his unwillingness to legally jeopardise colleagues. Luthuli's son (Christian Boyi Luthuli), Ronald Harrison, Z. K. Matthews and Gerald Pillay also articulated this perspective.

Buthelezi's Claims

A resolute proponent of Luthuli's unwavering support of non-violence is Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, President of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and former Chief Minister of Kwazulu. Buthelezi is not the only political figure to utilise Luthuli's name and prestige to buttress his power and influence; though he perhaps has the longest and most extensive record of such a practice.²⁵ In 1974, Buthelezi delivered a speech in honour of Luthuli who was given the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Award posthumously. In his speech, Buthelezi made it clear that he viewed Luthuli as his mentor. Buthelezi thus staked a claim to be Luthuli's protégé. To justify his own declared non-violent opposition to Apartheid, Buthelezi asserted that Luthuli's "guiding light was to achieve his ideals through non-violent methods".²⁶ Buthelezi accepted the

²⁴ Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 147.

A bomb detonated prematurely, critically wounding Ben Ramotse and killing Petrus Molefe.

²⁵ Buthelezi often utilised Luthuli's memory as a means to empower himself. Buthelezi, in using Luthuli's name, sought to disempower those with whom he was politically competitive. Despite the above, the possible opportunistic motivations for using Luthuli do not necessarily invalidate the perspective that Buthelezi had regarding Luthuli's stance on violence.

²⁶ LM, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, "The Awarding of the O. A. U. Merit Award Posthumously to the Late Chief Albert Mvumbi Luthuli: President General of the Banned African National Congress: To be Presented on Behalf of the O. A. U. by His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II", Maseru, 10 December 1974, 3. The event celebrated the tenth anniversary of the OAU's founding.

'South African exceptionalist' paradigm that deemed appropriate, due to South Africa's unique context, only non-violent strategies for overcoming colonialism and white supremacy. In contrast to the 'illegal' ANC, Inkatha *could* legally pursue a "composite strategy" involving a number of "non-violent methods in the struggle that goes on for human rights in South Africa".²⁷ Buthelezi conceded that many considered Luthuli's non-violent methods to be naïve and his approach to work non-violently to be obsolete.²⁸ Buthelezi claimed that methods of violence would only compel Whites into a laager invoking a backlash that would "only retard the struggle or complicate it" and that "Chief Luthuli's non-violence" is the "only way in which we can contribute toward the avoidance of some catastrophe".²⁹

In remarks made in 1976 on the occasion of the Luthuli Memorial Foundational Meeting in Swaziland, Buthelezi chronicled his ANC credentials and mentioned his undying devotion to Luthuli.³⁰ Buthelezi acknowledged that different people employed different means in different contexts and confessed that it could not yet be determined whether violent or non-violent means would be more effective. Buthelezi questioned how the late Luthuli would view the violent manner by which some prosecuted the struggle. Buthelezi boasted that he advocated only non-violent methods just as Luthuli did before him. Buthelezi emphasised the danger and risk inherent in a military strategy, warning:

Since our cause is a just one, we do not need to act in such a rash manner as to play into the hands of those whose fingers are itching to make us cannon fodder, in order to prolong their pernicious system, and control over us.³¹

LM, correspondence from T. E. Ntlhakana, Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Lesotho, to Nokukhanya Luthuli, 17 December 1974.

²⁷ LM, Buthelezi, "The Awarding of the O. A. U. Merit Award, 5.

²⁸ LM, Buthelezi, "The Awarding of the O. A. U. Merit Award, 3.

²⁹ LM, Buthelezi, "The Awarding of the O. A. U. Merit Award, 9.

³⁰ "Nothing could separate me from Chief Luthuli, during his lifetime. Nothing could separate me from him and his ideals, not even death".

LM, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, "Remarks Made on the Occasion of the Luthuli Memorial Foundational Meeting in Swaziland", 05 June 1976, 1.

³¹ LM, Buthelezi, "Remarks Made on the Occasion of the Luthuli Memorial Foundational Meeting in Swaziland", 13.

In a vitriolic speech at the Groutville school grounds on Sunday, 29 August 1982, Buthelezi utilised Luthuli's stature as a 'strategic pacifist' to make many subtle, and some not so subtle, broadsides against the ANC in exile.³² Buthelezi accused the ANC in exile of not being worthy to inherit the leadership of the liberation struggle on behalf of the South African people due to its deviation from Luthuli's (and the ANC's historic) policy of non-violence. Buthelezi stated that no matter the dire circumstances "Luthuli found no reason to abandon the things of value".³³ Buthelezi attempted to clarify the confusing stance advocated then and now by the ANC leadership regarding Luthuli's support of non-violence tactics by explaining that he "was a great man who stood firm when others wavered".³⁴ Buthelezi harangued the ANC leadership for breaking away from Luthuli's non-violent stance and for pursuing an unrealistic and almost suicidal violent strategy.

In the great tradition in which Chief Luthuli was a participant is where we must take the struggle another stage forward. This is not to leap off the precipice of reality, and pretend to each other that we could win the struggle only with the crook of our finger around the trigger of a gun. Many misguided patriots will die on the gallows, or in jail, because they think they can put our meagre resources against the might of the South African army and the cunning of the Security Police. We dare not go hunting for lions and elephants in dark forests bare-handed. We dare not leap off the precipice of reality. For the sake of everything we hold dear, we must be realists and pursue achievable goals. Chief Albert Luthuli had that realism in his politics...By no stretch of anyone's imagination can we conclude that Chief Luthuli's wish was that we cease to seek peaceful solutions after his death. Nowhere do I find his life as the terminating point in his thinking for peaceful solutions. He was prepared to suffer all

³² Dr. Albertinah Luthuli (Luthuli's daughter) was very upset at Buthelezi for his use of her father to forward his own political agenda against the ANC and even accused Buthelezi of abusing his relationship with the Luthuli family to manipulate her mother (Nokukhanya) into allowing Buthelezi to commandeer this and other memorial services. In response to this address, Albertinah issued a press statement in Zimbabwe indicating that "she did not take kindly to Buthelezi's criticism of the ANC leadership". Sithole and Mkhize, "Truth or Lies?", 78, footnotes 44, 45 and 46.

Sithole and Mkhize cited: *Ilanga*, 2-4 September 1982; *Star*, 16 December 1982; G. Maré and G. Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1988), 41; Smith, *Buthelezi*, 258.

³³ LM, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, "Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe Kgare Ya Tokoloho Ya Setjaba: National Cultural Liberation Movement", address presented by Buthelezi, Chief Minister of Kwazulu, at the Groutville Mission school grounds during "a prayer meeting to commemorate the last leader of the banned African National Congress who was democratically elected before the organisation was banned – Chief Albert Mvumbi Lutuli President-General of the African National Congress and Nobel Peace Prize-winner", Sunday, 29 August 1982, 6.

³⁴ LM, Buthelezi, "Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe Kgare Ya Tokoloho Ya Setjaba", 7.

things and would have chosen death itself rather than abandon his commitments.³⁵

In this speech, Buthelezi implied that the mantle of political leadership passed from Luthuli to him. Buthelezi asserted that the political baton was the policy of non-violence. Buthelezi contended the ANC in exile had dropped the baton. In 1982, Buthelezi maintained that to fight within the borders of South Africa, as did Luthuli, was the more noble strategy and within South Africa non-violent methods were most effective in destroying Apartheid. Buthelezi called the ANC in exile “political scavengers” who used the names of liberation heroes, such as Luthuli, to divide the liberation forces. Just as the ANC claimed those who advocated non-violence “fann[ed] divisions” within the liberation forces, so Buthelezi claimed that those who advocated violence caused division. Like Luthuli, Buthelezi argued that the violent strategy pursued by the ANC was unrealistic, if not suicidal. Buthelezi railed:

But the question we should address is whether this is the moment for us to clutch the AK-rifle and abandon the olive branch and the plough-share, even if we felt for argument’s sake that we should now abandon Chief Luthuli’s non-violent strategy today. I must say categorically that from a pragmatic point of view, that option as a feasible alternative, is not yet open to us.³⁶

Buthelezi boasted that he followed in Luthuli’s footsteps by building domestic constituencies such as *Inkatha*, though neglecting to mention that the government banned the ANC while sanctioning *Inkatha*. In his 1982 speech, Buthelezi directly refuted ANC claims:

There are those of us who would have us believe that by [the time Luthuli wrote his autobiography], the ANC was already working on a strategy of violence behind closed doors. I think it is fitting, as we remember Chief Luthuli[,] to note that his life was spent in opposition to violence. He as much as anyone else resisted the militancy of those who broke away eventually to form the PAC. There is in his whole career no hint of a

³⁵ LM, Buthelezi, “*Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe Kgare Ya Tokoloho Ya Setjaba*”, 12 and 14.

³⁶ LM, Buthelezi, “*Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe Kgare Ya Tokoloho Ya Setjaba*”, 25.

switch to violence, and in his whole life no indication that he espoused violent means toward political ends.³⁷

Two years later in a 1984 interview, Oscar Dhlomo, Secretary-General of *Inkatha* also claimed that the ANC in exile “abdicated control over liberation strategies in South Africa” when they decided to wage guerrilla warfare outside its borders.³⁸ That same year, Dhlomo criticised the ANC by saying that though Luthuli approved of Tambo and other ANC members going into exile, he never had “any intention that the external mission would eventually develop into a completely autonomous movement that would be free to decide on any liberatory (sic) strategies”. Luthuli intended the external mission to lobby international support for political and economic (non-violent) methods to fight Apartheid. Buthelezi chimed that the external mission deviated from the principles of Luthuli by “opt[ing] for violence”.³⁹ Buthelezi also implied that the external mission intended to isolate the President-General after the award of his Nobel Prize.⁴⁰ Chapter six presents evidence that Luthuli’s continued advocacy for non-violence into April 1962 embarrassed the Congresses’ Joint Executives sufficiently to mandate that he be spoken to and quieted. Ultimately, the government, more so than the Joint Congresses, muzzled Luthuli. The 1962 Sabotage Act sufficiently stifled his persistent pleas for non-violent solutions by prohibiting any newspaper from quoting him.

Well into the dawn of the democratic era, Buthelezi hoisted high Luthuli’s non-violent banner, though simultaneously threatening civil war if *Inkatha* or the Kwazulu government felt marginalised or if the future South African government’s central government was strengthened at the expense of regional ‘federal’ government. At a 1991 prayer meeting, ostensibly for “peace and progress in negotiations”, Buthelezi itemised the reasons why he and the Zulu ‘nation’ he represented should have full representation

³⁷ LM, Buthelezi, “*Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe Kgare Ya Tokoloho Ya Setjaba*”, 18.

³⁸ Carton, Laband and Sithole, *Zulu Identities*, 336, see endnote 34 on page 339. Sithole cited: Maré and Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power*, 137.

³⁹ Carton, Laband and Sithole, *Zulu Identities*, 336-7, see endnotes 35 and 36 on page 339. Sithole cited: Oscar Dhlomo, “*Inkatha and the ANC*”, *Leadership South Africa* 3, no. 1, 1984, 47.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, “Interview with Murray”, *Leadership South Africa* 4, no. 4, 1985, 26.

⁴⁰ Carton, Laband and Sithole, *Zulu Identities*, 337, see endnote 37 on page 339. Sithole cited: Wessel de Kock, *Usuthu! Cry Peace!: Inkatha and the Fight for a Just South Africa* (Cape Town: Open Hand, 1986), 72.

in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). In the spirit of Luthuli, Buthelezi boasted:

I have championed the cause of non-violence and the politics of negotiation for the whole of my political life. Since the 1970s, I have been calling for a negotiated settlement of South Africa's problems and I have argued strongly that South Africans were quite capable of ending apartheid themselves and establishing a fair and just democracy...I rejected the armed struggle as unnecessary and I rejected the punitive isolation of South Africa because I knew that black opposition to apartheid here on the ground would in the end succeed. I rejected the notion that only violence could end apartheid.⁴¹

ANC's Claims

Thus far, no documentary archival evidence has been found that indicates Luthuli ever supported the initiation of violence against the Apartheid regime. Not until after Luthuli died in July 1967, did an ANC document claim that Luthuli supported the decision to initiate violence. From April 1962 to his death in July 1967, Luthuli abstained from voicing his position on the armed movement and advocated non-violent methods, such as sanctions, to an international audience. Only when death irrevocably silenced Luthuli did the ANC claim that he supported the liberation movement's armed struggle.

On 21 July 1967 Albert Luthuli's death was announced to the world. In a tribute to Luthuli, the ANC, in good propagandist style, waxed eloquent about Luthuli's militant credentials. In doing so, the ANC quoted Luthuli's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech: "Ours is a continent in revolution against oppression...There can be no peace until the forces of oppression are overthrown" and in 1967 retroactively interpreted it as Luthuli's support of violence despite the fact the award and his acceptance speech advocated the opposite for the South African context. The ANC then provided a further tribute to Luthuli's support of violence with the following notably defensive argument:

⁴¹ Mangosuthu Buthelezi, "Address by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of Kwazulu at a 'Prayer Rally for Peace and Progress in Negotiations'", Umlazi, 15 December 1991.

Chief Luthuli is irrevocably linked with the African National Congress and the revolutionary movement of the people of South Africa. The period of his leadership of our organisation saw the change over from reliance of solely non-violent forms of struggle to a need for a combination of both legal and illegal clandestine forms of struggle following the ban on the African National Congress in April 1960. This new period was emphasised by a decision to prepare for armed confrontation of the enemy and the setting up of the armed wing of our revolutionary movement – Umkhonto we Sizwe. The enemies of our revolutionary struggle who were bent on fanning divisions inside the ranks of the ANC whilst at the same time making futile attempts to isolate Chief Luthuli from the main stream of the revolutionary movement, came forth with allegations that Chief Luthuli never approved the change-over from emphasis on non-violent struggle to the present phase. This was strongly refuted by Chief himself when he made a statement following the passing of prison sentences on our leaders at the conclusion of the Rivonia Trial in 1964... There are those amongst us who, whilst claiming to have been permanently inspired by Chief Luthuli's qualities of leadership are, however, working against the policies of the organisation he led until his last breath. These are people who from within the ranks of the oppressed population are counselling against the use of revolutionary violence with the plea that those who advocate this form of struggle are leading the people to catastrophic suicide.⁴²

After Luthuli's death, the ANC earnestly attempted to dispel that for which the world remembered Luthuli: his advocacy of non-violence and his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize. In the ANC bulletin *Mayibuye*, T. Makiwane sought to clarify the record.

It is true that Chief Luthuli was an advocate of non-violence. He was a champion of a multiracial society in South Africa. But Chief Luthuli never believed in non-violence at all costs in the struggle.⁴³

Makiwane then, like the ANC tribute to Luthuli after his death, quoted Luthuli's 1964 Rivonia statement as evidence of Luthuli's turn to violence; however, as this chapter later discloses, the Rivonia statement is not evidence of Luthuli's agreement with violent tactics. *Mayibuye's* statement substantiated how after Luthuli's death the ANC created the impression that Luthuli supported the turn to violence by obscuring his views on

⁴² University of Fort Hare (UFH), Howard Pim Africana Library (HPAL), ANC Archives (ANC), Oliver Tambo Papers (A2561), Folder C 39, "July 21", original typed manuscript.

⁴³ T. Makiwane, "Somlandela uLuthuli", *Mayibuye* 2, No. 29, 19 July 1968, 4-5.

violence. What Makiwane stated is true and yet untrue. Luthuli felt violence for the purposes of self-defence whether individual or corporate could be morally and strategically justified. Luthuli was not a pacifist. In the context of South Africa's fight for liberation from white supremacy, Luthuli never advocated or supported the use of violence.

The *Sechaba* Statement

The ANC claimed and continues to claim that Luthuli supported the move to initiate violence. In many documents emanating from the ANC over the years, the same refrain is heard:

There is a wrong and unfortunate impression that Chief Lutuli was a pacifist, or some kind of apostle of non-violence. This impression is incorrect and misleading. The policy of non-violence was formulated and adopted by the national conferences of the African National Congress before he was elected President-General of the organisation. The policy was adopted in 1951 specifically for the conduct of the "National Campaign for Defiance of Unjust Laws" in 1952. What is correct, however, is that as a man of principle and as a leader of unquestionable integrity, Chief Lutuli defended the policy entrusted to him by his organisation and saw to it that it was implemented. When that policy was officially and constitutionally changed, he did not falter.⁴⁴

In their article "Truth or Lies", Sithole and Mkhize articulated many profound points regarding the historiography about Luthuli. For example, Sithole and Mkhize dismissed a simple dichotomy between "truth or lies" concerning the ANC's claim that Luthuli supported the initiation of violence. Quotations from the ANC reveal the thesis was correct. In general, the ANC and its members do not categorically, or explicitly, state that Luthuli supported the use of violence. Rather, in general, the ANC through subterfuge and silence strongly implies Luthuli supported the initiation of violence. In doing so, the ANC can be accused of stating (half) truths to convey (not tell) a lie. For example, as chapter four reveals, because Luthuli would not and did not condemn the use

⁴⁴ UCT, MAD, LC, Jack and Ray Simons Papers (BC1081 / P28), no author cited, "Chief Albert John Mvumbi Luthuli, 1898-1967", *Sechaba* 1, no. 8, August 1967, insert supplement.

of violence, the ANC can claim “Luthuli did not falter [to accept the changed policy]”. Luthuli refusal to condemn the changed policy does not justify the assertion that he consequently agreed with the policy and subsequently supported it. Such an assertion obfuscates the actual contestation within the ANC and its partners and between Luthuli and Mandela in 1961 and avoids a critical assessment of the turn to violence.

Sechaba, the official organ of the ANC of South Africa, printed the above statement within a special supplement dedicated to Luthuli following his death. It was subsequently published verbatim in an issue of *Spotlight on South Africa*.⁴⁵ It was again published verbatim in the book *Lutuli Speaks: Statements and Addresses by Chief Albert Lutuli of the African National Congress* and again in a publication entitled *The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross*, published as the third volume of *South African Studies*.⁴⁶ The same apology can still be found verbatim on the current ANC internet websites.⁴⁷

By disregarding Luthuli’s theological foundation, commentators and historians risk distorting the ‘faith-based’ motivations behind his political principles and decisions. Luthuli did not subscribe to the ANC as his god or hold himself seminally accountable to the ANC. ANC nationalist interpreters of Luthuli’s life erroneously understand Luthuli to have been political before being spiritual. For Luthuli, the opposite held true. In his autobiography, Luthuli declared that which took priority in his life when he professed, “I am in Congress precisely because I am a Christian”.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Luthuli revealed, “My ambitions are, I think, modest – they scarcely go beyond the desire to serve God and my neighbour, both at full stretch”.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ UCT, MAD, LC, BC1081 / P28, no author cited, “In Memory of Chief Albert Luthuli”, *Spotlight on South Africa* 5, no. 30, special issue, 05 August 1967, 3.

⁴⁶ UCT, MAD, LC, BC1081 / P28.1, ANC South African Studies, *Lutuli Speaks: Statements and Addresses by Chief Albert Lutuli, President of the African National Congress of South Africa*, n.d., 6. Also known as *Lutuli Speaks: Portrait of Chief Lutuli*.

UCT, MAD, LC, BC1081 / P28.1, “The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross”, *South African Studies* 3, n.d., 5.

⁴⁷ ANC, Introduction to “The Lutuli Page”, www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/lutuli/, accessed 26 January 2008.

EtheKwini Online, “Chief Albert Luthuli”, by Khaya Ka Buthelezi. Found at: www.ethekwini.gov.za/durban/discover-durban/our_durban/history/famous_durbanites/politics/luthuli, accessed 14 March 2008.

⁴⁸ This quote is attributed to Luthuli in the inside jacket covers of the 1961 Collins and April 1987 Fontana Paperbacks (thirteenth impression) editions of *Let My People Go*.

⁴⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 24.

As chapter one indicates, Luthuli's 1948 speech at Howard University establishes that Gandhi substantively influenced Luthuli. Similar to Gandhi, Luthuli achieved the status of a hallowed icon whose perspective on the use of violence proved inconveniently problematic to the ANC. A post-1967 re-interpretation of Gandhi exposes the ANC's failure to acknowledge his philosophical and theological foundations and thus misinterpreted his thought. In a *Sechaba* article entitled "From Gandhi to Mandela", written to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Natal Indian Congress, the ANC prefaced its historical apology asserting that...

...It is not necessary for our purposes to examine Gandhi's philosophical views which derived largely from his religious beliefs. The main field of Gandhi's activity lay in politics. And it is here that the role of the Mahatma is to be sought.⁵⁰

In addition to neglecting the theological motivations, writers of nationalist history also selectively quoted Gandhi and Luthuli to explain away contradictions between their non-violent stances and the ANC's support of violence. The ANC selected quotations from Luthuli and Gandhi to justify its position on violence, even if they made the opposite point. This occurred when Luthuli and Gandhi, on the spur of the moment, utilised hyperbole to emphasise a point. Commentators quoted the hyperboles and interpreted them literally, thereby missing the points.

Luthuli admired and emulated Gandhi's utilisation of strict non-violent methods. Their similar perspectives embarrassed the ANC when it decided to utilise violence. In defence of itself, the ANC desperately and acrobatically interpreted that Gandhi did not view violence as an inviolable principle despite the fact that he resorted to "extremely abstruse reasoning" to advocate non-violence "to the masses in the face of an enemy determined to rule by force".⁵¹ To provide evidence that Gandhi could support the use of violence, *Sechaba* selectively quoted a small portion of his 1938 "Declaration on the Question on the Use of Violence in Defence of Rights" wherein he postulated:

⁵⁰ "From Gandhi to Mandela: In commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the Natal Indian Congress by Mahatma Gandhi", *Sechaba* 3, no. 5, 05 May 1969, 10-2. Also found in: de Bragança and Wallerstein, *The National Liberation Reader*, 2: 43-7.

⁵¹ de Bragança and Wallerstein, *The National Liberation Reader*, 2: 45.

Where the choice is set between cowardice and violence I would advise violence. I praise and extol the serene courage of dying without killing. Yet, I desire that those who have not this courage should rather cultivate the art of killing and being killed, than to basely avoid danger. This is because he who runs away commits mental violence; he has not the courage of facing death by killing. I would a thousand times prefer violence than the emasculation of a whole race. I prefer to use arms in defence of honour rather than remain the vile witness of dishonour.⁵²

Sechaba asserted that even Gandhi, the imperialists' hallowed 'prophet of non-violence', "concede[d] that violence was preferable to cowardice and dishonour". In searching for an ethical loophole to justify its own turn to violent methods, the ANC mistook hyperbole for reality, interpreted it literally and thus missed Gandhi's fundamental point that was antithetical to its own made in *Sechaba*. Gandhi statement, "Where the choice is set between cowardice and violence I would advise violence" conjured a self-imposed ultimatum whereby one is forced to choose between two, and only, two choices. Gandhi, in this hypothetical world, chose violence because cowardice and dishonour would "emasculate a whole race" by committing "mental violence". Gandhi's argument continued and maintained, and this is the central point missed by *Sechaba's* commentator, "I praise and extol the serene courage of dying without killing". In other words, Gandhi stated that those who die in the struggle *without killing* are the ones who are truly and perfectly courageous! Gandhi saw a third option and was not locked in his hypothetical bilateral world of those who are cowards and those who are violent. In fact, Gandhi implied that those who resort to killing behave cowardly as compared to those who fight non-violently when he says, "Yet I desire that those who have not this courage [to die without killing] should rather cultivate the art of killing and being killed". For Gandhi, the 'to be praised and extolled' option is to courageously struggle and to die without killing. By misinterpreting Gandhi's hyperbole, the *Sechaba's* commentator concluded that the armed struggle in South Africa does not contradict Gandhi's views, for he stated that he preferred violence to cowardice.

⁵² "From Gandhi to Mandela", *Sechaba* 3, no. 5, 05 May 1969, 10-2. *Sechaba* cited: Mahatma Gandhi, "Declaration on Question of the Use of Violence in Defence of Rights", *Guardian*, 16 December 1938.

However, in reality, Gandhi preferred courageous non-violence.⁵³ Most revere Gandhi and Luthuli as ‘freedom fighters’ who advocated strategic pacifism to achieve political objectives. The ANC interpreted Gandhi’s view on violence in a similar manner that it interpreted Luthuli’s. The ANC engaged in creative hermeneutics in order to both honour and contradict Gandhi and Luthuli.

In their contemporary historical analysis of Luthuli, elite political icons have mistaken Luthuli’s seemingly positive general references to the use of violence and interpreted them in the same manner that *Sechaba* interpreted Gandhi’s reference to violence. Luthuli’s speeches contain hundreds of quotations advocating ‘strategic pacifism’ that are strikingly similar to Gandhi’s. Likewise, commentaries similar to *Sechaba*’s by ANC leaders have argued from anecdotal conversations that Luthuli justified exceptions (loopholes) to his advocacy for ‘strategic pacifism’ in the South African context and hence reasoned that he advocated the opposite of that for which he stood.

The potential danger of inaccurately interpreting hyperbole can be observed in Luthuli’s as well as Gandhi’s statements. For example, in 1953, *Drum* magazine printed a quote that would make any Africanist, now or then, quiver with discomfort. In justifying the common cause and need for cooperation between Blacks and Indians, Luthuli snapped:

Since we welcome the sympathy and support of all races in the rest of the world, it would be absurd and contradictory to reject Indians in our own country. I myself would rather see the African people utterly destroyed than see them turn against the Indians.⁵⁴

Here, Luthuli, like Gandhi, conjured a bilateral hypothetical situation so as to emphasise a primary point. For Luthuli, marginalising the Indians within the context of the struggle

⁵³ Jonathan Wallace, “Nonviolence”, *Ethical Spectacle*, June 2001, 1-8. Found at: www.spectacle.org/0601/nonviolence.html, accessed 26 May 2008.

M. K. Gandhi, “Between Cowardice and Violence”, from *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1-3. Found at: www.mkgandhi.org/nonviolence/phil8.htm, accessed 26 May 2008.

⁵⁴ “In His Office, and on Durban’s Esplanade, the President of the Congress Gives His Views to DRUM, in This Important Interview”, *Drum*, May 1953 (International June). Also found in: Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 14.
Jurgen Schadeberg, ed. *Nelson Mandela and the Rise of the ANC* (Parklands: Jonathan Ball, 1990), 56-7.

would be unthinkable. Luthuli's central point could not be, 'I would rather see the African people utterly destroyed'. Because many could, and likely did, misinterpret the above hyperbole, *Drum* printed a retraction at Luthuli's request. In the July 1953 edition, Luthuli changed the above statement to:

Since we welcome the sympathy and support of all races in the rest of the world, it would be absurd and contradictory to reject Indians in our own country. I therefore would oppose most strenuously any African who acted tyrannically and discriminately against other racial groups, including Indians.⁵⁵

Gandhi stated he preferred violence to cowardice. Not being a pacifist, Luthuli also preferred violence to cowardice. Yet, those perspectives, in and of themselves, do not support a thesis that Gandhi or Luthuli supported violence within the South African context. Luthuli and Gandhi did not consider those who fought utilising non-violent means to be cowards. While accepting his Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway for his stance on utilising non-violent methods, Luthuli reasoned that as a Christian he could not "look on" while "systematic attempts [were] made" to:

...debase the God-factor in man or set a limit beyond which the human being in his black form might not strive to serve his Creator to the best of his ability".⁵⁶

In other words, potentially, violence is preferable to being a coward for by doing nothing in the face of oppression, one participates in one's own dishonour because one negates one's own God-given potential. Luthuli, like Gandhi, spoke of two types of cowards: one, apathetic and indifferent (loathed by both Gandhi and Luthuli) and the other, those who have not enough courage to resist oppression non-violently. Luthuli described the consequences of being indifferent and craven in a 1958 speech (quoted in chapter one):

⁵⁵ "Interview with Luthuli", *Drum*, July 1953, 45.

⁵⁶ Albert Luthuli, "Africa and Freedom", lecture delivered in Oslo, Norway on 11 December 1961 upon receiving the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize. Asmal, Chidester and James, *South Africa's Nobel Laureates*, 22.

There is in the Bible a verse which says that all those who are cowards, all those who grow apathetic because of the difficulties before them and run away from the struggle – that they shall not be able to reach that glorious place. It also says that the cowards will be together with all the evildoers.⁵⁷

Mandela's Claim

This chapter utilises secondary sources to trace the constructed contemporary understanding that Luthuli supported the turn to violence. Initially, many harmonious 'independent' sources of information related to Luthuli's stance on the ANC's decision to form *MK* seem to exist. Also, on cursory examination, many current, independent and popular portrayals of Luthuli's resignation to, if not support of, violence seem to exist. However, upon closer study and reflection, only one primary source indicated that Luthuli supported *MK*'s formation when the Joint Congresses made the decision. The source was former President Nelson Mandela's autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* that stated Luthuli participated and ultimately supported the decision to create an organisation that would utilise violence, albeit reluctantly and as a result of much persuasion. Mandela wrote:

Before leaving [for the Pan African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa in Addis Ababa in February 1962], I secretly drove to Groutville to confer with the Chief. Our meeting – at a safe house in town – was disconcerting. As I have related, the Chief was present at the creation of *MK* [*Umkhonto we Sizwe*], and was as informed as any member of the National Executive Committee about its development. But the Chief was not well and his memory was not what it had once been. He chastised me for not consulting with him about the formation of *MK*. I attempted to remind the Chief of the discussions that we had in Durban about taking up violence, but he did not recall them. This is in large part why the story has gained currency that Chief Luthuli was not informed about the creation of *MK* and was deeply opposed to the ANC taking up violence. Nothing could be farther from the truth.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Albert Luthuli, "Our Vision Is a Democratic Society", speech delivered in 1958 to a meeting organised by the South African Congress of Democrats in Johannesburg. Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 29.

⁵⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 287-8.

Mandela's text is seminal to current nationalists' historical memory of Luthuli's stance on violence for it stands as a pivot between two divergent understandings of Luthuli's involvement to support the formation and/or launch of *MK*. After comparing those texts that predate Mandela's autobiography with those that postdate it, one finds two different historical memories. Texts written prior to Mandela's account (Benson/1963, Bunting/1975, Karis and Carter/1977, Benson/1986, Buthelezi/1986 and Slovo/1995) cast much doubt about Luthuli's awareness of the decisions and/or whether he supported the decisions to resort to violence. Those texts written following Mandela's book provide accounts that affirm Luthuli's awareness and support the decisions to form *MK* (Meer/2005, Kathrada/2004, Sisulu/2005, Callinicos/2004 and Sampson/1999). The sheer weight of Mandela's saintly popularity and the millions of copies of his autobiography read globally explains how such a relatively recent text superseded the many previous accounts of Luthuli's role in the formation of *MK*. The global brand that is Mandela ensured his version of events became the orthodox view.

Texts written after Mandela's autobiography cite *Long Walk to Freedom* extensively and/or can be cross-referenced with his text so as to identify it as an original source. Most, if not all, other sources accept, comply with or otherwise cite Mandela's recollections. For example, while Ismail Meer's biography does not cite Mandela's autobiography, Mandela wrote the forward. Thus, it is logical to surmise that Meer's version would corroborate Mandela's.⁵⁹ And it does. Likewise, Sampson's book on Mandela, prominently entitled, *Mandela: The Authorised Biography* would unlikely deviate from Mandela's autobiography, thus attaining its "authorised" status. And it does not.

As Kathrada wisely stated in his *Memoirs* (and cited as a quotation introducing chapter five), "...it should be borne in mind that even people involved in the same event remember the details differently, and amnesia is no friend of accuracy". The problem is that a vast majority of the post-*Long Walk to Freedom* biographical and autobiographical authors funnel (or, cross-reference) their accounts of the ANC's decision to form *MK* through Mandela's textual gauntlet. In Mandela one finds an original source, the nationalists' historiographic 'Adam'. To understand the dynamics at work when an

⁵⁹ This 'logical' assumption may be a fallacy, as Mandela also wrote the forward to Slovo's autobiography.

emerging nation 'creates' its history, secondary sources must be analysed, interpreted and then compared with primary source evidence. The concluding evaluation of secondary sources must recognise the profound impact that an icon such as Mandela and his corresponding recollection of events has on the formation of South African history. Any accuracy, or more importantly, inaccuracy, in Mandela's account multiplies exponentially as biographies and autobiographies reference Mandela's version. Reproductively, Mandela's text may be considered 'asexual'. Any mutation will be exacerbated as the 'gene pool' of information is limited. Texts written after Mandela's autobiography that cite or draw from it extensively need to be considered suspect. The weight of evidence in favour of Luthuli's cognisance and support of initiation of *MK* may be premised only upon Mandela's account from which most others, subsequently, merely reference. Therefore, secondary sources derived primarily from a single source when addressing Luthuli's involvement and possible support of the ANC's decision to incorporate violent methods in its struggle for liberation must be questioned and their veracity viewed with suspicion.

The custodians of Mandela's legacy are also complicit in excising the high degree of contestation that existed between Mandela and Luthuli on the issue of violence. At Fort Hare's ANC Archives, an exhibition sponsored by the Nelson Mandela Foundation highlighted 'a' perceived historic confluence of Luthuli and Mandela and thus attests to the homogenisation of nationalist history concerning the events that led to the ANC's adoption of violence.⁶⁰

The Foundation's exhibition explored various themes such as "Modernisers", "Speaking to Power", "International Legitimacy" and "Armed Struggle", to fabricate Mandela and Luthuli's parallel life paths. For example, the exhibition stated that "Luthuli and Mandela were both from "powerful traditional families", though this is not necessarily true for Luthuli. The elected chieftaincy of the *Amakholwa* in Grootville can not be described as 'traditional' or 'powerful'. Furthermore, the exhibition stated,

⁶⁰ UFH, HPAL, ANC, Nelson Mandela Foundation, Exhibition. Viewed on 09 July 2008. The Nelson Mandela Foundation forwarded to the Luthuli Museum a draft text of this exhibition in 2007. The Luthuli Museum requested me to provide comment on the exhibition's text. I complied. Thereafter, I requested, through the Museum, the Nelson Mandela Foundation to allow me to quote the proposal's text. The Nelson Mandela Foundation declined the request. Fortunately, the proposal's text appeared unaltered in the exhibition's display at Fort Hare University from which I quote.

“Luthuli and Mandela continued to embrace the traditional roles into which they were born but both wrestled with the idea of accepting chieftainship” though Luthuli was “born” into no such role. In his autobiography, Luthuli identified himself as a “commoner”.⁶¹ The exhibition intimated that Luthuli and Mandela (though for Mandela vicariously through his father) “were stripped of their chieftainships because they refused to act as puppets for the authorities”.

The exhibition’s portrayal of Luthuli’s supposed conversion to utilise violence relates more closely to this focus of this study. One penultimate statement bluntly read as follows: “Approached by Mandela, Luthuli agreed to the armed struggle”. This statement is a gross inaccuracy. As this study asserts, Luthuli reluctantly yielded to the Congresses’ democratic decision to form a military organisation in the event the armed conflict became inevitable. Because Luthuli objected to this decision, he insisted the military organisation not be directly affiliated with the ANC that he led as President-General. The exhibition further elaborated on the decision to embark upon the armed struggle. In doing so, it merely regurgitated Mandela’s autobiography. The exhibition posited:

In June 1961 when Nelson Mandela introduced the idea of the armed struggle at an ANC meeting he was concerned that, because Chief Luthuli was committed to non-violence, he might be reluctant to agree. After listening to hours of motivation Luthuli finally agreed that armed struggle was inevitable. Luthuli opened the debate again at a meeting with the Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats, the South African Congress of Trade Unions and the Coloured People’s Congress. At the end of the meeting Mandela was mandated to form a military organisation, separate from the ANC.

The exhibition also in a hackneyed fashion placed quotations alongside each other to give the impression that Mandela and Luthuli possessed coterminous philosophies on the role of violence. The exhibition strategically placed Mandela’s May 1961 “we will have to reconsider our tactics” adjacent to a July 1961 quotation whereby Luthuli denied being a pacifist to obfuscate the contestation between the two leaders regarding the turn to violence. The exhibition’s abbreviated narration of Mandela’s autobiography moved from “after listening to hours of motivation, Luthuli finally agreed the armed struggle

⁶¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 29.

was inevitable” to “at the end of meeting, Mandela was mandated to form a military organisation”. Many nuanced misconceptions exist within this version of history. First, it can be argued that rather than “was mandated to form”, the Joint Congresses and the ANC ‘permitted’ or ‘allowed’ without the threat of disciplinary action, the formation of a military organisation. Second, the relentless argumentation by Mandela over two long nights sufficiently disillusioned and exhausted Luthuli to concede the inevitability of violence. It does not follow that Luthuli supported the decision. The old leader yielded to intense motivations and a compromise decision democratically derived. For Luthuli, the inevitability of violence derived from Mandela’s resolute mind rather than from the political context.

Immediately following the exhibition’s text that read “Mandela was mandated to form a military organisation”, it tactically cited Luthuli’s Rivonia Trial statement (“no one can blame brave...”) in solidarity with those convicted three years later in 1964. This chapter elaborates further on the perfunctory manner that nationalist narratives recite this and other statements by Luthuli to mischaracterise his stance on violence.

Veterans’ Claims

ANC veterans consistently imply that Luthuli participated in the initiation of the armed struggle and served as its leader. In one audio-visual documentary on Luthuli, various prominent ANC members insinuated that he supported the initiation of violence. Billy Nair remembered:

He [Luthuli] already knew, before he left for Oslo, to receive the Nobel, he knew that night, that Umkhonto was going to be launched. Chief is safe in his home, nine o’clock that night, throughout South Africa there were bombings taking place. And I was part of that campaign.⁶²

Nair’s assertion that Luthuli knew *MK*’s launch date is unfounded. In Durban where Nair operated, the launch of *MK* occurred one day earlier than planned, on 15 December rather

⁶² “The Legacy of a Legend”, documentary film, 2005.

than 16 December 1961.⁶³ Luthuli arrived on 15 December at his Groutville home. The first act of sabotage occurred that same evening, unplanned and unauthorised. A target of opportunity presented itself. Drunken guards left vulnerable a site being cased for the following evening's scheduled launch.⁶⁴ MK's official launch did not occur until 16 December 1961.

In the same audio-visual documentary, the current President-General of the ANC, Jacob Zuma, recalled that Luthuli named the ANC's military wing. Tom Lodge correctly indicated that Mandela named the new armed movement.⁶⁵ Zuma told an anecdote about Luthuli and the rationale behind the origin of the name "*Umkhonto we Sizwe*".

At the end [of our discussion] when we were saying, "What is this organisation going to be called?" he [Luthuli] told a little story and said, "If you are a man and you fight with somebody out there, and this somebody is stronger than you are, and you retreat to your home, and this somebody gets into your home, attacking you in front of your wife and the children, what do you do if you are a man?" [Luthuli] says, "You take up your spear, and use your spear to fight the man".⁶⁶

The story, or elements thereof, may be true. The context of the story is unknown. Luthuli was likely explaining that he was not a pacifist as he had in other instances. Resisting a home intruder and opposing political and economic oppression are radically different contexts possibly requiring varying strategies to oppose.⁶⁷

In his book on South African Nobel laureates, Kader Asmal related:

Clearly, Albert Luthuli favoured non-violent means of struggle against apartheid. For example, he advocated economic sanctions against the apartheid regime as a way to advocate a 'relatively peaceful transition'. Yet he was not a pacifist. He once observed that anyone who thought he

⁶³ Nair's statement that Luthuli "knew" may be Nair's understanding and not necessarily an intentionally false statement.

⁶⁴ Ntoko Babenia and Iain Edwards, *Memoirs of a Saboteur: Reflections on My Political Activity in India and South Africa*, Mayibuye History and Literature Series 58 (Bellville: Mayibuye Books, 1995), 59.

⁶⁵ Tom Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006), 90. See endnote 33 where Lodge cited in a 2004 interview with Joe Matthews.

⁶⁶ "The Legacy of a Legend", documentary film, 2005.

⁶⁷ I acknowledge that within any given "context" of offensive violence, differences in scale and/or method exist. I also acknowledge that, for some, those differences in scale and/or method may not warrant an alternative defensive approach, especially within a metaphor.

was a pacifist should try to steal his chickens.⁶⁸ I believe that he came to appreciate – under the pressure of events – that some measure of force was inevitable, but he felt that any use of force should be done through a military formation that was separate from the political movement of the ANC. I know that the plans for an armed struggle, under the auspices of a new military formation, were submitted to Chief Albert Luthuli for his approval. Just days after Albert Luthuli received the Nobel Peace Prize, on 16 December, 1961, the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, engaged in its first use of force to sabotage a government installation. In the hope of peace, an armed struggle had begun.⁶⁹

Asmal correctly stated Luthuli “favoured” non-violent means to fight apartheid. In July 1961, it may have been true that Luthuli perceived violence as inevitable. But in October 1961 after the announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize, Luthuli perceived a changed context. Options dramatically opened as a result of global publicity and acclaim. Luthuli yielded to the democratic decision that the formation of an armed movement would be permitted. Because of his objection to the use of violence, Luthuli lobbied adamantly that the organisation should be separate from the ANC and thus himself. No lives should be taken; only sabotage on symbolic targets would constitute the violence. Preliminary plans may have been presented to Luthuli to *form MK*. Evidence suggests that Luthuli did not approve any plans to *activate MK*. Though Asmal does not lie about Luthuli’s participation, he conveyed the opposite of the truth.

Arguments that Luthuli supported the armed struggle are also found outside the South African context by veterans of other wars of national liberation. For example, soon after Luthuli’s death, Mohamed Meghraoui, a member of Algeria’s National Liberation Front (FLN), submitted an article that he intended to be re-printed in the ANC’s publication, *Sechaba*. Meghraoui refuted distorted “Western press” descriptions of Luthuli “as a pacifist, a Ghandi (sic) of South Africa”.⁷⁰ Throughout the article, Meghraoui described Luthuli as a “revolutionary”, “fighter” and a “militant”, though

⁶⁸ This frequently told narrative about chickens seems to derive from Mandela. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 322. Sampson, *Mandela*, 151.

⁶⁹ Asmal, Chidester and James, *South Africa’s Nobel Laureates*, 9-10.

Curiously, Asmal does not state that Luthuli granted his approval for the plans for a new military formation that were submitted to him. Asmal shared the same sentiments in the video documentary “The Legacy of a Legend”.

⁷⁰ Meghraoui repeatedly misspells Gandhi throughout his article. From this point I will include the correct spelling.

Luthuli used these terms without the violent connotations that Meghraoui, Tambo and others who eulogised him did.⁷¹ Using many quotations, some accurate, some not so accurate, Meghraoui vacuously concluded:

For our part, we are convinced that Luthuli's activities, far from being an advocate of pacifism or a Gandhi of Africa as certain malicious press says. He preached constantly stood (sic) for the overthrow of the racist regime by the use of the most orthodox method of our times, i.e., the armed struggle.⁷²

"The Road to Freedom" Statement

The African Liberation Reader, edited by de Bragança and Wallerstein, included in their chapter entitled "The Road to Armed Struggle" Luthuli's public response to his dismissal from the Grootville chieftainship by the National Party government.⁷³ The inclusion of Luthuli's response in a chapter thus entitled is, at best, highly anachronistic and, at worst, an implied distortion of historical reality. The editors' introduction ignored something as obvious as the title of Luthuli's statement, "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross". For anyone conversant with the Christian faith, the title of the statement understands that suffering and non-violence are the means to political liberation (or, theologically, 'salvation'). No amount of theological hermeneutics or political

⁷¹ UFH, HPAL, ANC, A2561, "July 21".

Tambo wrote: "...armed wing of our revolutionary movement...", "...the enemies of our revolutionary struggle...", "...the main stream of the revolutionary movement...", "...counselling against the advice of revolutionary violence..."

⁷² UFH, HPAL, ANC, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, draft article by Mohammed Meghraoui, Head of the National Liberation Movements Commission at the External Relations of the National Liberation Front (FLN), 31 August 1967, 4.

Even the ANC found Meghraoui's statement that Luthuli stood for the overthrow of the racist regime by violent methods too explicit and perhaps thus did not publish the piece.

The grammatical errors were likely caused by translation from French to English.

Inaccurate: "Meditating over new methods of resistance by Africans, didn't [Luthuli] one day say, 'The man who will give the Africans weapons will enjoy their unqualified support and loyalty?'" More than likely, Luthuli conveyed a semblance of the above to highlight the dangers of armed conflict and the demagoguery that often results from it.

Accurate: "Didn't he say that 'peace and revolution make uneasy bed-fellow and that there shall be no peace until all the forces of reaction have been overthrown'?"

Though this statement can be and is quoted to advocate that Luthuli supported violence, the context of Luthuli's Nobel speech and his statements after its reception indicate that the statement did not support the use of violence.

⁷³ de Bragança and Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader*, 2: 34.

contextualisation can claim that for Luthuli, in this statement, the way of the cross of Jesus Christ included violence. To imply that anything in Luthuli's statement is a precursor for his support of violence, as do de Bragança and Wallerstein, is to advocate the opposite of what Luthuli wrote. "The Road to the Freedom" for Luthuli was the cross; precisely the opposite would be "The Road to Freedom Is the Armed Struggle".

Iconic political commentators such as Tambo and Mandela frequently cited Luthuli's famous 1952 statement responding to his dismissal as a philosophical prelude to, or justification for, violence.⁷⁴ In this statement, Luthuli asked, "...who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently and moderately and modestly at a closed and barred door?"⁷⁵ Yet, Tambo and Mandela omitted that Luthuli consistently and unreservedly advocated only non-violent methods to attain liberation after this 1952 statement. Raymond Suttner provided an example of ANC nationalist history by stating in a recent article that the 1952 "The Road to Freedom" statement indicated the fruitlessness of non-violent strategies in 1961. Suttner stated:

Remarks by Luthuli himself set the stage for debate on the broader issue of a change of strategy. When he made his famous statement that 30 years [of] knocking against the doors had brought no positive results but more apartheid laws, he was indicating the fruitlessness of non-violent acts against an intransigent regime.⁷⁶

Technically, nothing Suttner stated is incorrect; yet, he wrote with the intention for others to infer that Luthuli argued for the armed struggle.

Since Luthuli's death, the ANC obfuscated Luthuli's position on violence with strategic silences. In the July 1972 issue of *Sechaba*, the ANC, under the heading "Violence Is the Key", offered no explanation or rationale for the claim of Luthuli's

⁷⁴ Nelson Mandela, "I Am Prepared to Die" (London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1979), 28.

"I Am Prepared to Die" was Mandela's statement in the dock in Pretoria Supreme Court, 20 April 1964 at the opening of the defence case.

⁷⁵ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 289.

UFH, HPAL, ANC: A2561, Box 70, Folder C 39, Nelson Mandela, Rivonia Trial (1963-1964) transcripts, opening statement, 3.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 773.

⁷⁶ *Sunday Times*, "How to View Albert Luthuli's Legacy", by Raymond Suttner, 06 July 2008.

radical philosophical shift to violence and the ANC used an un-contextualised quotation to anachronistically have Luthuli agree with then-1972 thinking.

The whole history of South Africa is punctuated with violence: violence by the white oppressors against the unarmed and voteless black majority. In this situation we hear cries for a peaceful approach to our problems from an increasing number of so-called friends. The latest call by Roy Wilkins, a director of the U.S. National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People to the black people in South Africa to seek peaceful means to solve their problems. A fitting reply to Wilkins and others of his ilk who preach to us, was given by Chief Albert Luthuli when he was dismissed as Chief long ago as 1952: "...[who will deny that] thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately and modestly at a closed door? What have been the fruits of my many years of moderation? Has there been any reciprocal tolerance or moderation from the Government or United Party? No! On the contrary..."⁷⁷

Again, the author of the above quote failed to mention the title of the address from which the statement came: "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross". For Luthuli, the way of the cross was non-violent suffering. The statement advocated exactly that which *Sechaba* insinuated it refuted.⁷⁸ Those who cite the "Who will deny...?" passage from "The Road to Freedom" statement neglect to also reference that which follows it:

...I have joined my people in the new spirit that moves them today, the spirit that revolts openly and boldly against injustice and expresses itself in a determined and non-violent manner...I have embraced the non-violent passive resistance technique in fighting for freedom because I am convinced it is the only non-revolutionary, legitimate and human way that

⁷⁷ "Inside South Africa: Spotlight on Apartheid", *Sechaba* 6, no. 7, July 1972, 14-5.

Also, this same quote, used frequently as a standard as a call to arms, is presented in *Dawn* alongside quotes from the *MK* Manifesto, Nelson Mandela as the First Commander-in-Chief of *MK*, the *MK* military code and Oliver Tambo as Commander-in-Chief, all of which advocated for the armed struggle. UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn: Journal of Umkhonto we Sizwe: Souvenir Issue, 25th Anniversary of MK* (African National Congress, 1986), i.

⁷⁸ Scott Couper, "Luthuli and the Armed Struggle: Nelson Mandela as the Historiographical Father", 14 March 2006, 22.

This unpublished paper was presented to a University of KwaZulu-Natal Department of History seminar. This paper can be found at: www.history.ukzn.ac.za/?q=seminar_archive&op0=%3D&filter0=Couper and subsequently at: www.history.ukzn.ac.za/?q=node/636, accessed 25 January 2008.

could be used by people denied, as we are, effective constitutional means to further our aspirations.⁷⁹

The seminal tome entitled *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* also misleads its readers. Despite the fact that this text chronicled events from 1960 to 1970, the second chapter entitled “The Turn to Armed Struggle” predictably and anachronistically introduced the chapter with Luthuli’s ubiquitous 1952 “Who will deny...?” quotation.⁸⁰ The authors failed to reference that Luthuli issued the statement nine years before the turn to violence and that the statement as a whole does not at all support “the turn to armed struggle”. The use of Luthuli’s 1952 quote as an implied justification for a December 1961 decision that Luthuli opposed is historically disingenuous. To the authors’ credit, they conclude when examining evidence rather than highlighting quotations that “It is unlikely that Luthuli ever fully reconciled himself with the decision” to form a separate organisation from the ANC to initiate the turn to armed struggle.⁸¹ Luthuli’s statement revealed that for him, the way of the cross entailed non-violent suffering.

Concerning Luthuli’s motivations, the existential or eschatological ramifications of the means to liberation superseded liberation itself. Luthuli did not doubt South Africa’s political liberation would occur. The question was: when. Yet, political liberation meant very little if the liberated lost moral or spiritual integrity in the process. Within the context of Apartheid South Africa, Luthuli preached an ethic whereby neither self-defence nor retaliation proved soteriologically effective. In this vein, “The Road to Freedom” statement advocated redemptive sacrifice. In a piece entitled “African Nationalism - Some Inhibiting Factors”, Fatima Meer explained that redemptive sacrifice identifies suffering with martyrdom and salvation.⁸² Meer related that during the 1950s, the ANC instilled such an ethic of redemptive heroism that it said to its constituency, “Won’t it be good, my mothers and fathers, when the blood of the youth of the African people is spilling for a good cause”.⁸³ Meer felt that such an ethic not only became the

⁷⁹ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 48 and 50.

⁸⁰ SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 53.

⁸¹ SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 89.

⁸² Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life*, 92 and 239, endnote 40. Lodge cited:

Fatima Meer, “African Nationalism-Some Inhibiting Factors”, in *South Africa: Sociological Perspectives*, ed. Heribert Adam (Oxford: Oxford University, 1971), 140-3.

⁸³ Lodge, *Mandela*, 92 and 239, endnote 40. Lodge cited:

means to an end, but it “reached a stage when it became the end in itself”.⁸⁴ Chapter six comments further on Luthuli’s views on the ethics of violence. Suffice to say, redemptive heroism supplied inspiration and hope, ingredients that some argued MK’s launch diminished; nevertheless, morally and spiritually based hope remained latent within the ANC allowing it to still claim the moral high ground for decades to come.⁸⁵

The frequent use of a very few select quotations by Luthuli to imply he supported the turn to violence can almost be considered an ANC tradition. For example, Alfred Nzo once recalled the turbulent times after Sharpeville:

After the bannings it became clear that the era of peaceful struggle had come to a close. As Chief Luthuli put it, “for many years we have been knocking at a closed door, for many years, banging at the door of white racism”.⁸⁶

In a similar fashion, the ANC selectively appropriated quotations from Luthuli’s “No one can blame...” statement in response to the Rivonia convictions to justify the turn to violence.

Rivonia Statement

On 12 June 1964, Luthuli issued a statement when the court sentenced Mandela, Sisulu and six other leaders to life imprisonment in the “Rivonia Trial”. Morocco’s representative read the statement at the meeting of the United Nations Security Council on the same day. Luthuli said:

The African National Congress never abandoned its method of a militant, non-violent struggle, and of creating in the process a spirit of militancy in the people. However, in the face of the uncompromising White[s]’ refusal to abandon a policy which denies the African and other oppressed South Africans their rightful heritage – freedom – no one can blame brave just

Meer, “African Nationalism”, in *South Africa: Sociological Perspectives*, Adam, 140-3.

⁸⁴ Lodge, *Mandela*, 92 and 239, endnote 40. Lodge cited:

Meer, “African Nationalism”, in *South Africa: Sociological Perspectives*, Adam, 140-3.

⁸⁵ Lodge, *Mandela*, 92.

⁸⁶ Interview with Alfred Nzo. Cited in:

SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 70.

men for seeking justice by the use of violent methods; nor could they be blamed if they tried to create an organised force in order to ultimately establish peace and racial harmony... They represent the highest in morality and ethics in the South African political struggle; this morality and ethics has been sentenced to an imprisonment it may never survive.⁸⁷

The above quote is perhaps the second most often cited by the apologists for violence who retrospectively argue that Luthuli supported the initiation of violence.⁸⁸ In a *Sunday Times* article, Raymond Suttner provided a balanced perspective, but still leaned toward the ANC nationalist history that understands the Rivonia Trial statement implied support for violence. Suttner stated:

After the sentencing of the Rivonia trialists, his statement was nowhere near condemnation of their resort to violence. In fact he explicitly states that they were not to be blamed for concluding that there was no option to them, given the repression of the apartheid regime and the need to avoid spontaneous acts of violence taking on a racial character. "No one can blame...", he said.⁸⁹

Suttner then rightly continued to recognise that "Luthuli never took up arms..." and that "He did not advocate armed struggle".⁹⁰ Suttner did not articulate that Luthuli opposed the turn to violence until requested not to by those within the liberation movement or until the state gagged him with the Sabotage Act in 1962.

Commentators rarely state categorically that Luthuli supported the initiation of violence, though they frequently imply that he did. For example, in an address at the Occasion of the Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture Week, the then Deputy President Jacob Zuma recollected:

⁸⁷ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 798-9.

de Bragança and Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader*, 2: 40-3.

Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 151-2.

The statement was taken from the text entitled, *United Nations and Apartheid, 1948-1994*, 282-3 and from a United Nations publication produced by the Unit on Apartheid, no. 22/69, 10 December 1969, 34-5.

⁸⁸ "Umkhonto we Sizwe – Spear of the Nation", *Sechaba* 3, no. 4, June 1969, 15.

T. Makiwane, "Somlandela uLuthuli", *Mayibuye* 2, no. 29, 19 July 1968, 5.

⁸⁹ *Sunday Times*, "How to View Luthuli's Legacy", by Prof. Raymond Suttner, 06 July 2008.

⁹⁰ *Sunday Times*, "How to View Luthuli's Legacy", by Prof. Raymond Suttner, 06 July 2008.

Another highlight of Chief Luthuli's leadership of the ANC is that it was during this period that the armed struggle was launched. He clearly articulated this ANC policy in a statement issued on 12 June 1964, when Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and six other leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment in the Rivonia Trial...He said, "The African National Congress never abandoned its method of a militant, non-violent struggle...However,...no one can blame brave just men for seeking justice by the use of violent methods..."⁹¹

Zuma, and others who use Luthuli's 1964 statement to justify a 1961 decision to launch MK (with no intermediate justification) fail to explain how Luthuli "clearly articulated" the ANC's violent strategy while simultaneously indicating that the ANC never abandoned the non-violent struggle. Luthuli clearly articulated his inaccurate understanding of ANC policy when he said, "The ANC never abandoned its method of a non-violent struggle". Luthuli's "No one can blame..." statement was not the ANC's policy, but his personal sentiments. Those personal sentiments conveyed understanding, not agreement, about a given course of action. Zuma and other nationalist interpreters of South African history understand Luthuli publicly supported the turn to violence with the Rivonia Statement. A closer reading of the tortuously crafted Rivonia statement suggests quite the opposite.

In the 1964 Rivonia Statement, Luthuli took pains to highlight that the ANC never abandoned non-violent methods.⁹² Luthuli emphasised the ANC's adherence to non-

⁹¹ Jacob Zuma, "Address by Deputy President Zuma at the Second Matthew Goniwe Annual Lecture on the Occasion of the Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture Week", University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 02 August 2004, 2. Found at:

www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2004/zuma0803.htm, accessed 20 March 2008.

⁹² Luthuli's statement that the "ANC never abandoned its method of militant, non-violent struggle,..." is problematic. In his draft biography, Yengwa commented upon the ANC's Lobatse Conference, held in secret just over the Bechuanaland (now Botswana) border in October 1962. Yengwa records, "Surprisingly the subject of sabotage was not very controversial and the conference unanimously agreed to embark on the armed struggle". Yengwa stated, "In [the] 1963 [Rivonia] trials, the Lobatse Conference was used as evidence of the ANC's support for the armed struggle".

LM, MYP, unpublished typed manuscript, 108. Also see: Interview with Govan Mbeki.

SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 135 and 574.

Was Luthuli's statement that "the ANC never abandoned its non-violent struggle" a continuation, long overdone, of Slovo's "necessary fiction" characterisation that made a distinction between the ANC and MK? Slovo states that "The public posture of MK as an independent body was formally maintained until the end of 1962 when in a London speech Robert Resha referred to it as the military wing of the ANC". Slovo, *Slovo: An Unfinished Autobiography*, 151.

Or, was Luthuli correct?

violent methods in a statement related to those sentenced to life imprisonment for violence so as to gingerly make a distinction between the writer who represented the ANC and those convicted who did not (they represented *MK*). An argument can be made that the ANC decided to pursue *both* non-violent and violent means. Yet, to have “never abandoned” non-violent means while simultaneously opting to utilise violent means is a contradiction. Technically, it could be argued that Luthuli held that prior to the ANC’s legal ban in 1960 “the ANC never abandoned its method of militant, non-violent struggle”. Yet, this perspective would render Luthuli disingenuous given that he considered the ANC an entity in 1961 when he insisted that *MK* must be separate from the ANC (Slovo’s “necessary fiction”).⁹³ Luthuli clearly implied that he was not a pacifist when he lauded those sentenced as representing “the highest in morality and ethics”. For years Luthuli repeatedly warned that “time is running-out”, that people are desperate and impatient.⁹⁴ Luthuli could not argue convincingly, in July 1961 when the decision to form *MK* was made, that violence was not inevitable given the intractable position of the National Party. Before the Nobel Committee announced that Luthuli won the Peace Prize, he, with others of similar ilk such as Z. K. Matthews, acceded to those justifying a resort to violence because they had very persuasive, if not convincing evidence, based on precedent, to validate their claims. Hence, Luthuli declared, “...no one can blame brave, just men...” Yet, Luthuli was not one of those “brave, just men” who resorted to violence in order to seek justice. Luthuli had always characterised an initiation of violence as “reckless”. Bravery is not necessarily intelligent, discerning, wise or pragmatic. Luthuli intentionally made a subtle but important distinction between ‘sympathy’ and ‘support’. Sympathy or solidarity with Mandela and the others does not assume support or agreement with their methods. Luthuli also made a subtle but

Bunting stated, “The Lobatse conference took no specific decisions about the use of violence, and the actions of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* were not discussed. One reason for this was the presence at the conference of a representative of the Bechuanaland police...However, the delegates were briefed in private by Kotane and others at talks held outside the conference hall, and the conference resolutions made it plain that the delegates were all very aware that violence was an inescapable reality of the political scene, and they accepted it”.

Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 273.

⁹³ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 280, see endnote 18, 643. Callinicos cited:

“Joe Slovo, *Dawn*, cited in Howard Barrell, *MK: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (London: Penguin Forum Series, 1990), 24”.

⁹⁴ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “A Fateful Choice in the Election”, by Albert Luthuli, 13 August 1961.

important distinction between the ANC organisation he led as President-General and the “brave just men” who could not be blamed if their patience became exhausted. In one interview recorded by Mary Benson, Luthuli articulated the above point:

If the oppressed people here ever came to indulge in violent ways that would be in reaction against the policy of Government suppressing them. However, much as you may disagree with them, you cannot *blame* them. But the leadership stand by the non-violent method (emphasis is Benson’s and therefore Luthuli’s).⁹⁵

Perhaps most difficult to explain is Luthuli’s declaration that Mandela and others possessed “...the highest in morals and ethics within the liberation struggle”. By lauding the ethics and morals of Mandela and others, Luthuli confessed that he did not subscribe to pacifism as an ideology. So, why could Luthuli not advocate and support violence, despite being the leader of a liberation movement that effectively agreed to form an organisation that would be prepared to initiate violence? The reasons are as simple as they are complex. Luthuli’s strong “Christian leanings” (his ecclesiastic upbringing and his theological foundation), the mutually suicidal context for the oppressed and oppressing people should violence be initiated and the advent of new strategic opportunities afforded by his reception of the Nobel Peace Prize persuaded him against supporting the initiation of violence by MK.

Ironically, the greatest distortion of Luthuli’s position on violence came not from an ANC politician, but from a Swedish cleric and the primary advocate of his reception for the Nobel Peace Prize, Gunner Helander. As a Christian in solidarity with Luthuli and the anti-Apartheid struggle during the 1960s, Helander espoused a unique stand on the ANC’s turn to violence: “I had no objection to it”. Then, in a manner similar to current ANC politicians, Helander justified his admiration of Luthuli (whose “line had been ‘violence under no circumstances’”) and his countenance of the ANC’s turn to violence by selectively quoting Luthuli anachronistically. In a 1996 interview, Helander implied Luthuli changed his stance on violence when the ANC did by stating:

⁹⁵ Benson, *Chief Albert Lutuli*, 65.

Luthuli likely stated this around October 1961 when she served as his secretary following the Nobel announcement.

But later [Luthuli] said, 'I have been knocking on a closed door for year after year. I could not use violence myself, but I cannot any longer condemn those who advocate the use of violence[']'.⁹⁶

In this quotation of Luthuli, Helander amalgamated both the 1952 "The Road to the Freedom Is Via the Cross" statement and the 1964 Rivonia Trial statement (that in their totality advocate non-violence) to imply incorrectly that Luthuli supported the ANC's 1961 turn to violence.

Retrospective Significance

In South Africa, 'struggle credentials' (such as a prison term at Robben Island or membership in *MK*) are very useful components of any aspiring politician's *curriculum vitae*. Likewise, the accolades, memorials, foundations and biographies and the re-naming of streets, municipalities and building structures necessitate a persistent justification of the armed struggle by prominent retiring liberation icons, thus encouraging a rationalisation and sanitisation of the highly controversial and contested positions taken in 1961. Ambition and justification render the historical 'protection' of the perceived utility of armed struggle by liberation icons necessary. ANC nationalism affects not only a country's present perception of itself, but also its perception of its past.

Some historians seriously question the efficacy of the armed struggle in South Africa. They examine the decision taken in July 1961 strategically and without prejudice in favour of living legends that rightly deserve to be placed in the pantheon of great twentieth century human rights leaders. Many historians today agree with Luthuli's warnings about the use of violence. In *The State of Africa*, Martin Meredith provided ample defensive rationale for Mandela and nationalist historians to 'remember' that Luthuli as the leader of the ANC supported the turn to violence rather than remember his consistent opposition to it.

⁹⁶ Sellström, *Liberation in Southern Africa-Regional and Swedish Voices*, 286.

The second portion of Helander's quotation of Luthuli may derive from Benson or Kotane who attributed similar words to Luthuli.

In terms of the objectives that Mandela had set, Umkhonto's sabotage campaign was a total failure. The impact on the economy was negligible. Foreign investors, far from being frightened away during the early 1960s, became more deeply involved. The white electorate reacted in support of the government not in opposition to it. The government, instead of changing course, was spurred into taking ever more repressive counter-measures, obliterating fundamental civil rights on the ground that it was dealing with a communist-inspired conspiracy to overthrow the state. All that was proved, ultimately, was that a collection of amateur revolutionaries were no match for the brute strength of the South African state. In trying to explain the collapse of Umkhonto, revolutionary enthusiasts spoke of 'a heroic failure'. But it was more than a fatal miscalculation about the power of the government and the ways in which the government was willing to use it. The price for this miscalculation was huge. With the nationalist movement destroyed, a silence descended for more than a decade.⁹⁷

In a study on Luthuli, it is the production of history by politicians, rather than by historians, that begs critique. Politicians have an extra-historical agenda, and thus a heightened bias, when remembering and articulating a conceived history.⁹⁸ In an audio-visual commemorative tribute shown on 27 February 2007 at the Luthuli Museum in Groutville, the then Premier of Kwazulu-Natal, Sibusisu Ndebele, ended by urging "researchers to research".⁹⁹ Ndebele rightly claimed that it is in remembering that we will discern that which we wish to "emulate". This praxis enables remembering and

⁹⁷ Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2005), 127-8.

⁹⁸ I do not mean to imply that only professional, or academic, historians are unbiased or neutral in carrying out their work. On the contrary, they are not unbiased or neutral. But nevertheless, due to some prerequisite training in the theory and methods of historical inquiry and the cross-examination by others in their field, it is hoped that there is at least some restraint and thus a minimisation of bias. The two checks mentioned do not for the most part curb the excesses of bias and prejudice for politicians.

⁹⁹ "As we remember forty years after Nkosi Albert Luthuli, we ask the people of South Africa, we ask the people of Kwazulu-Natal, to do justice to the memory of Nkosi Albert Luthuli. We ask our writers to write, we ask our researchers to research, we ask our singers to sing, we ask our poets to write poems, and this is how he will live on and on. Let us use this forty years anniversary of Nkosi Albert Luthuli to record his wonderful history, this wonderful life that lived amongst us that we are privileged to have him as part of this province and in remembering we will try to emulate his lessons".

Sibusisu Ndebele in "'Servant of the People'".

This audiovisual documentary was shown during the launch of what the Kwazulu-Natal government declared was "The Year of Luthuli" (2007). The Premier's office intended that events during the year highlight various characteristics of Luthuli's leadership. Most of these characteristics conveniently, although not altogether disingenuously, coincide with the ruling party's (ANC) then-current publicly declared core values.

telling to be relevant. It can be argued that the intention to emulate makes the accuracy of any remembering and telling indispensable.

The commemorative film began by informing the audience that Luthuli was born in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now, Harare, Zimbabwe). As this study's opening chapter points out, Luthuli was born near or on the Mt. Solusi Mission, in the vicinity of Bulawayo. Such an error highlights the desperate need for "researchers to research", no matter how little research may be required.¹⁰⁰ A more subtle and substantive error relates to the film's vague implication that Luthuli supported the launch of the armed movement. Ndebele narrated:

We know the walks that used to take place in the sugarcane fields outside his house here in Grootvlei with Moses Kotane, with Walter Sisulu, with Nelson Mandela. All these leaders coming to consult because he could not move. And it was at this stage that Umkhonto we Sizwe was formed.¹⁰¹

The film also questionably quoted Luthuli threatening, "If the man of the pen cannot give us our rights, we will turn to the man of the sword".¹⁰²

If the Premier's rationale for understanding the lessons of Luthuli is to be soberly reflected upon, then any conclusions reached must be seen as applicable and relevant to a current context. As Michel Trouillot rightly stated, "Historical relevance does not proceed directly from the original impact of an event".¹⁰³ Today, the issue of violence pervades political discourse in South Africa. For example, in 2007 Ndebele reassured the country that there was no basis to the accusations that some within the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal considered areas of the province "no-go" areas for former President Thabo

¹⁰⁰ One of the most egregious errors I have encountered is at the Nkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital located in Durban. At the entrance of the multi-million Rand state of the art hospital a commemorative plaque informs every staff member, patient and visitor that Luthuli was the "first Nobel Peace Prize laureate". More incredible than the mistake is the failure to amend it so many years after its unveiling during the hospital's opening.

¹⁰¹ "Servant of the People", February 2007.

¹⁰² "Servant of the People", February 2007.

The assistance of many failed to locate this quotation in Luthuli's autobiography. Efforts by the Luthuli Museum to determine from the Premier's office from where the quote was sourced proved unsuccessful.

¹⁰³ Michel Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995), 20.

Mbeki.¹⁰⁴ The mention of “no-go” areas ominously reminded South Africans of a perceived latent Xhosa and Zulu ethnic rivalry and the threat of violence to maintain power in Kwazulu-Natal. The public recently debated the legitimacy of numerous non-violent and violent forms of resistance in Khutsong, previously under the jurisdiction of the Gauteng Province and then controversially transferred to the North West Province.¹⁰⁵ Even the popular *Umshini Wami* (“Bring Me My Machine Gun”) chorus of the current President-General of the ANC, Jacob Zuma, sung by xenophobes attacking foreigners residing in Alexandra, Johannesburg in May 2008, serves as an example linking the past struggle for liberation, Luthuli’s opposition to violence as a tactic to achieve liberation and the current and future lessons that ought to be learned from the “wonderful life” lived by Chief Albert Luthuli.¹⁰⁶

In the accompanying fortieth anniversary commemorative brochure also produced by the KZN Premier’s office, a message from James Orange amalgamated the justification for honouring Nelson Mandela with the justifications for honouring the “Trinity” (that is Luthuli, King and Gandhi) when he wrote:

It was because of this that Chief Luthuli, as secretary-general of the ANC, got his inspiration to fight a non-violent fight. This non-violent philosophy made it possible for Gandhi to receive the Nobel Peace Prize and it would set the foundation for Chief Luthuli, Dr. King and Nelson Mandela to have the same honour bestowed upon them.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ *Sowetan*, “No ‘No-Go’ Zone for Mbeki”, by Canaan Mdlletshe and Mary Papayya, 24 April 2007. <http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=445262>, accessed on 30 April 2007.

IOL, “Mbeki’s KZN Meeting Was Planned”, 23 April 2007.

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=&art_id=nw20070423215515671..., accessed on 30 April 2007.

¹⁰⁵ *Mail & Guardian Online*, “Khutsong: Life Amid Violent Protests”, by Reesah Chibba, 30 April 2007.

http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=265141&area=breaking_news/breaking..., accessed on 30 April 2007.

IOL, “Khutsong Protest Violence Erupts”, 19 April 2007.

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=6&art_id=nw2007041911190011..., accessed on 30 April 2007.

¹⁰⁶ *Natal Mercury*, “Violence Has an Anthem”, 21 May 2008.

Natal Mercury, “Singing of Umshini Wami Is a Cause for Extra Concern”, 23 May 2008.

¹⁰⁷ “Commemoration of Chief Albert Luthuli, 2007”, Launch Edition, Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Government, Office of the Premier, printed booklet, February 2007, 12.

Rev. James Orange is the Chair of the M. L. K. March/Africa/African/American Renaissance, USA.

There are issues, large and small, within the above statement. First, Luthuli was not the "secretary-general". Luthuli was the "President-General". Second, Gandhi did *not* receive the Nobel Peace Prize.¹⁰⁸ Third, and most important, Mandela can not be historically amalgamated with Gandhi, Luthuli or King concerning non-violence because since at least June 1961, Mandela never supported *Satyagraha* as a means by which to liberate the oppressed from their oppressors.¹⁰⁹ In a quintessential utilisation of silence, Orange did not mention Frederik de Klerk, though he received the Prize jointly with Mandela. Mandela received the Prize, *not* for his use of non-violent methods to achieve liberation (as did Luthuli, King and, according to Orange, Gandhi), but rather for his efforts to engender *reconciliation* after a violent war initiated by the National Party regime and eventually responded to in kind for thirty years by the ANC. In fact, the ANC and Mandela would not capitulate to domestic and foreign pressure to disband *MK* even after his release from imprisonment.¹¹⁰ After June 1961, there is little basis to equate Mandela's strategies for liberation with those of Gandhi, King or Luthuli.

Luthuli's Death

A desired 'meaning' ascribed to Luthuli's death motivates those who advocate that its cause is a "mystery". This study draws upon the conclusion that both the ANC, due to his steadfast adherence to obsolete methods of militant non-violence, and the state, through numerous bannings due to his refusal to condemn violence and/or sanction the state's Bantustan policy, rendered Luthuli politically impotent. Luthuli's death provided an opportunity for his allies to re-insert him into the political arena to their advantage. A benign death in no way could advance the struggle. Given the degree of distrust accorded to the state, it is almost inconceivable that any 'accident' would not engender accusations of foul-play. For Luthuli, the President-General of the ANC, politically silenced for so

¹⁰⁸ India gained independence on 15 August 1947. In 1948, the year Gandhi most likely would have received the Peace Prize, no award was given.

¹⁰⁹ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 270-1.

¹¹⁰ As late as December 1991, in response to the National Party regime's call for *MK* to disband, the ANC responded, "MK will remain in place until its mission is completed".

UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Umkhonto we Sizwe, 30 Fighting Years, 16 December 1961 – 16 December 1991* (Marshalltown: African National Congress, Department of Information and Publicity, 1991).

many years by the state, only a death, where “some sinister thing must have happened” could have happened.¹¹¹ However, no documentary or criminal evidence yet exists pointing to the possibility that the South African government murdered Luthuli.

Accusations that the state murdered Luthuli are ubiquitous. Luthuli’s wife, Nokukhanya, and son, Edgar, alleged and his children, Thandeka and Albertinah, allege that he was assassinated. After learning of Luthuli’s death, the ANC also suspected foul-play. Thabo Mbeki, the media and recent historical documentaries adopted the speculative theory that a political conspiracy caused Luthuli’s death. Sithole and Mkhize stated that Luthuli suffered “a mysterious death in Groutville on 21 July 1967” and that “the circumstances of his death are shrouded in suspicion”.¹¹² Another noted historian conveyed euphemistically that Luthuli’s death is a “mystery” despite the fact that a formal inquest into Luthuli’s death concluded otherwise and neither Nokukhanya nor the family’s legal representative contested the findings at the time.¹¹³ Tor Sellström’s text on Sweden’s role in the anti-Apartheid movement also stated that Luthuli “died under mysterious circumstances”.¹¹⁴ Even the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, notably remarked in the 2004 Inaugural Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture that Luthuli dedicated his life to the achievement of freedom for his people “until his untimely and mysterious death on 21 July 1967”.¹¹⁵ Other government publications fuel the speculation that the cause of Luthuli’s death remains shrouded in mystery. Zibonele Ntuli, who wrote for the Government Communication and Information Service in 2004, was grammatically unclear when reporting, “It is here [Groutville Congregational Church] that the bones of one of the heroes of our time lie – Chief Albert Luthuli – whose mysterious tragic death is still uncertain”.¹¹⁶ While the bones within the grave confirm

¹¹¹ Bernard Magubane, in “The Legacy of a Legend”.

¹¹² Sithole and Mkhize, “Truth or Lies?”, 69 and 71.

¹¹³ *Sunday Times*, “How to View Luthuli’s Legacy”, by Prof. Raymond Suttner, 06 July 2008.

¹¹³ *Sunday Times*, “How to View Luthuli’s Legacy”, by Prof. Raymond Suttner, 06 July 2008.

¹¹⁴ Tor Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa: Formation of a Popular Opinion 1950-1970*, 2nd ed. (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2003), 1: 178.

Sellström implied that the mysterious circumstance was Luthuli’s accident with a train.

¹¹⁵ Thabo Mbeki, “The Tempo Quickens”, in Prof. Desarath Chetty and Deanne Collins, eds., “The Deepest International Principles of Brotherhood and Humanity: The Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture, 21 October 2005”, (Public Affairs and Corporate Communications, University of KwaZulu-Natal), October 2005), 15.

¹¹⁶ *BuaNews Online*, “Ten Years of Democracy Celebrates Chief Luthuli’s Ideas”, by Zibonele Ntuli, (Government Communication and Information System, 28 March 2004).

Luthuli's death is certain, many question the circumstances in which Luthuli died. The University of KwaZulu-Natal's Neurology Department at the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine explained in its website its association with Luthuli and in doing so mentioned in its brief biography of him that he "died in a train accident under mysterious circumstances".¹¹⁷ In interviews with those who knew Luthuli, suspicion abounds. Rhona Mzoneli, who lives near the Luthuli home remembered, "We were all shocked to hear about his death. We are still not too sure how he died. Official reports said he died from a train accident, nobody knows how it happened".¹¹⁸ Thabani Mthiyane, a retired lecturer from the University of Zululand on a visit to Luthuli's grave once questioned, "Who really knows the spot where Luthuli died in a so-called train accident?"¹¹⁹ In recently published newspaper articles sweeping statements were made insinuating that it is not known how Luthuli died. One article in the *Weekend Witness* begins, "Albert Luthuli's death in 1967 is still shrouded in mystery" despite there being no evidence that the cause of death was ever in doubt. The classification of Luthuli's death as 'a mystery' is not supported by evidence, old or new, and it contradicts the official finding that a train accident killed him. The article continued:

It is said that he was killed by a train in the Groutville area where he lived but many have suspected that this could have been a more sinister plot and nearly 40 years later the true facts still have not emerged.¹²⁰

One of the curious things about conspiracy theories is that the "true facts" will never emerge.

The writing of history is often determined by biases and prejudices held by authors and not by documented archival evidence. As this chapter uncovers, a preponderance of historical commentary remarking on Luthuli's stance and/or involvement in the 1961 decision to form *MK* is actually second-hand commentary

<http://www.buanews.gov.za/view.php?ID=04032908301010&coll=buanew04>, accessed 08 July 2006.

¹¹⁷ University of KwaZulu-Natal, Medical School Campus, Neurology, home page.

<http://www.ukzn.ac.za/departments/default.asp?dept=neurologyunm>, accessed 08 July 2006.

¹¹⁸ *BuaNews Online*, "Ten Years of Democracy Celebrates Chief Luthuli's Ideas", 28 March 2004.

¹¹⁹ *BuaNews Online*, "Ten Years of Democracy Celebrates Chief Luthuli's Ideas", 28 March 2004.

¹²⁰ *Weekend Witness*, "The Many Mysteries of the Black Christ", by Carol Brown, 23 September 2006, 10.

originating from Mandela. History originating seemingly from one source, and then duplicated exponentially, provides the illusion that multifarious sources mutually reinforce one another. In a certain political context, the error of one “historiographic ancestor” providing any false fact or conclusion is multiplied. The theory that the state murdered Luthuli originates only from the family and/or the ANC and not from any eye witness accounts or documented evidence.

Contained within the Luthuli Papers is the Inquest Report for Albert Luthuli.¹²¹ The inquest contains a sworn statement by Nokukhanya dated 01 August 1967, signed about one week after her husband’s death.¹²² The conclusion of her statement read, “In my own mind and that of my family we are satisfied that he met with his death as a result of pure accident”. Less than ten years later, in a March 1975 article entitled, “My Life with Chief Luthuli”, Nokukhanya stated:

I fear I’m going to die before I’m satisfied...I don’t want to live very long. I want to die as I am – nice and strong. The years are running out, and I badly want to satisfy myself about the Chief’s death. If I don’t it will be the greatest disappointment of my life. When people ask me how the Chief died, all I can say is that I don’t know. When we recovered the body we found that his ribs were not broken and his body had no injuries. When a train hits a man his body is badly injured.¹²³

¹²¹ Dorothy Woodson of the New York State University, Buffalo wrote in 1981, “The Albert J. Luthuli papers on microfilm, includes a wide range of materials, in varying formats, from the time of his appointment as Chief of the Lower Tugela (Zululand) District in Natal, South Africa in 1942 to the inquest papers into his death in 1967. For reasons both political and personal, the collection, although extensive, is not comprehensive...The present two reel collection of the Albert J. Luthuli Papers on microfilm were obtained by the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the University of Cape Town from the Center for Research Libraries, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.”

UCT, LC, MAD, BCZA 78/46-7, AJLP, Reel #1.

The inquest records (found in the Luthuli Papers), from which I in chapter six dissect and recompile to summarise Luthuli’s death, number approximately 50 pages. Some transcripts were recorded in Afrikaans that have been translated.

¹²² I refer to Albert as “Luthuli” and to his wife as “Nokukhanya”. I wish to differentiate the two to avoid confusion by using only a surname to refer to each. I do not intend to convey any disrespect to Mrs. Luthuli by using her first name.

¹²³ *Trust*, “South African Memory: My Life with Chief Luthuli”, March 1975.

Nokukhanya may have made these comments when recollecting the state of the body in the casket. She said in Peter Rule’s biographical book that the accident “did not in any way distort his looks”. Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 146.

I possess a copy of a photograph stored at the Bailey’s Archives in Johannesburg of Luthuli in his casket. Luthuli’s head appeared undamaged, though there appeared to be some bruising to the forehead. Nokukhanya’s understanding that “his body had no injuries” conflicts with statements she made during an interview included in Rule’s book. Nokukhanya stated, “I think he was struck by a long object like the fork

Many, most notably Luthuli's family, believe that someone intentionally killed Luthuli. In Peter Rule's biography, Nokukhanya mentioned that "it seems to me that [the Chief] had some kind of premonition that he was going to die" by malicious circumstances.¹²⁴ Nokukhanya also had her premonitions. On the day before his death, when she argued with her husband not to investigate the cane workers by himself, she "feared someone might attack him".¹²⁵ In her interviews with Rule, Nokukhanya intimated that the security police caused her to fear for Luthuli's life. She related how they would pick him up from home and try to pressure him to leave the ANC. Nokukhanya knew neighbours were spying on her husband, reporting his and others' arrivals and departures. She feared it would be all too easy to plan an attack. Nokukhanya stated that people in Natal were being killed in cane fields and then carried to the train tracks.¹²⁶ Ten days before his death, Nokukhanya recollected that a white man, who upon meeting Luthuli, called him a "Communist".¹²⁷ It must be noted that Nokukhanya only articulated 'suspicions', and not 'evidence' (even circumstantial) of foul play.

Albertinah Luthuli, Luthuli's eldest daughter and a Member of the National Parliament, is convinced her father was murdered.¹²⁸ In an interview with her held early 2006, Albertinah disputed Mandela's perception that in 1961 Luthuli could not remember important meetings he chaired and government 'officials' accusations that Luthuli's

used for stoking the fire (*intshumentshu*) after the railway line was shifted to bring the engine close to him. This left a small hole in the back of his head".

Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 144.

Note: The train and engine could not have been "shifted" to bring the train closer to a pedestrian walking along the bridge.

¹²⁴ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 140.

¹²⁵ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 140.

¹²⁶ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 140.

Nokukhanya suggested that the killing of Nkosinathi Yengwa, an ANC member in Maphumulo, by bush knives as he hid in a cane field was politically motivated. Nokukhanya expressed concern that Groutville neighbours were spies and knew Luthuli's schedule. She contended that others in Groutville were murdered and then dragged to the train tracks so that it can be claimed they were hit by a train (142 and 144).

¹²⁷ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 140.

Such an aspersion had been cast for decades. Presumably, by 1967, such a repetitive accusation might very well have amused Luthuli, rather than caused him to feel "depressed".

¹²⁸ *Daily News*, "Luthuli's Death Was Not an Accident, Says His Daughter", by Martin Challenor, 30 August 1991, 5.

senility possibly caused his collision with the train at Gledhow. Albertinah confided her suspicions about the manner of her father's death.

The world was [unintelligible] and they know that he wasn't senile, exactly. And then also, I don't like it myself because it kind of fits into this thing what the people who we believe killed him want the world to believe. Ya. We believe that he, you know, he was killed by the Apartheid system, by the Apartheid regime, at Gledhow. It wasn't an accident. And they gave the same reasons, when they say he was senile, he couldn't hear, he couldn't see. Now, you ask anybody, they will tell you...He could hear. He could hear. And he could see also. One eye was not good. The other one was good. He could see. That is why he could walk on his own all the way, and all that kind of thing. So, you know that kind of thing is, which, obviously, really isn't [a] true reflection of the state of Albert, my father, at that particular time, at that time. That he was senile and all that kind of thing.¹²⁹

Though he is now deceased, preserved are the suspicions of Edgar Sibusiso Luthuli, one of Luthuli's sons:

I don't think my father was struck by the train. He used to cross the bridge often. When I was home, I would walk with him, and one thing I noticed was that he was very, very, careful. When a train was coming he would stand, not even walk, and hold onto the railings tightly. The space was big enough for the train to pass you on the bridge. My suspicions were confirmed one day in 1983 or 1984, when I was shopping at Checkers in Stanger. An elderly man, recognising me as Luthuli's son, came up to me and said he knew how my father had died. If I was interested I should come to his house and he would tell me. He told me he had been working somewhere near Gledhow Station for the Railways when the accident happened. But I decided not to follow it up. It was a time of severe political repression and I was very suspicious of his motives.¹³⁰

Confusion seems to exist as to whether the family recently requested a formal investigation of the accident. The February 2006 minutes of the Parliamentary Monitoring Group recorded a reporter's misunderstanding that the Luthuli family had

¹²⁹ Interview with Dr. Albertinah Luthuli, 04 January 2006, at the Luthuli Museum, Groutville, Kwadukuza.

¹³⁰ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 144-5.

requested an investigation. The Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula, replied denying that the Luthuli family called “for an investigation into the mysterious death of Chief Albert Luthuli”.¹³¹

There are ‘facts’ related to Luthuli’s death; they are just considered “not true” by their detractors. Suspensions, rather than evidence to the contrary, fuel alternative theories. The narrator of a film documentary on Luthuli produced by Amandla Communications ominously engendered doubt about Luthuli’s official cause of death when his script read, “Inkosi Luthuli died in circumstances shrouded in controversy in 1967”.¹³² Luthuli visited Goolam Suleman’s home on a daily basis as the two were close friends and the home doubled as the ANC President’s office. Suleman also related suspicions, again, always originating from the family, about Luthuli’s death. In one interview, Suleman dismissed entirely the inquest into Luthuli’s death.¹³³

There are a lot of questions that are unanswered about Luthuli’s death, about how he died. And I don’t think that the family believes that he died naturally, that he was knocked down by the train. Nobody yet knows how he died.¹³⁴

The claim that “no one yet knows how [Luthuli] died” is repeatedly made despite the fact that Nokukhanya signed an affidavit indicating that she suspected no foul play and that legal counsel (Andrew Wilson) present at the inquest offered little cross-examination (that is, asked no “unanswered” questions), provided no alternative theories, called no witnesses nor disputed the inquest’s findings.

Thandeka Luthuli, another daughter, reminiscent of her mother, maintained that a train did not strike her father. Rather, another instrument struck him, presumably wielded by his murderer.

On *post mortem* when he was examined, there were no multiple injuries like you would find in a train accident. There was only one large gash of a wound at the back of his head as well as swelling of the wrist which

¹³¹ Parliamentary Monitoring Group, Ministry Media Briefing, Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster, 09 February 2006.

<http://www.pmg.org.za/briefings/briefings.php?id=225>, accessed 08 July 2006.

¹³² “The Legacy of a Legend”, 2005.

¹³³ *Daily News*, “Lutuli Death: Inquiry Opens”, 19 September 1967.

¹³⁴ “The Legacy of a Legend”, 2005.

indicated that after he was probably hit with a blunt instrument and as he was getting weak and life was waning out of him he held on to a rail and he twisted his wrist and so our view and the view of many people is that it was a game of dirty tricks.¹³⁵

Thandeka's interview contradicted both the *post mortem*, that she cited, and consequently the District Surgeon/Examiner (van Zyl) and the Stanger Hospital Superintendent's (Gregersen) sworn testimony. According to the *post mortem*, extensive injuries were diagnosed. It is unknown if the X-rays were ever presented as evidence. The medical attendants reported that a blood transfusion was given and the wounds were sutured.

Bernard Magubane also shared similar conspiratorial sentiments.

He had travelled that route daily. He knew when the trains pass. You know, he was an intelligent man. How would he just walk on the rails? It just doesn't make any sense. It doesn't add up. Some sinister thing must have happened. You know? This was a very critical time. I mean, uh, in South Africa, in the history of this country. 1967 was really a very critical time. I mean, and the symbolism of Luthuli was probably just too important – his presence, was just too important. If you wanted to create dissension within the movement, how else could you do it? By eliminating him under circumstances in which you could not point at the person who was actually responsible for his death.¹³⁶

Magubane doubted Luthuli crossed the rail bridge, even with an on-coming train approaching, though his son Edgar witnessed and testified that he did so on previous occasions. Indeed Andries Pretorius, the Station Manager at Gledhow, indicated in his statement that the bridge "had become a common means" by which to cross the river and that he himself had "been on the bridge when a train had passed over it at the same time whilst I was walking along".¹³⁷ Eness Mfeka, the woman who tended Luthuli's shop affirmed that "he normally walked over the rail bridge".¹³⁸ The possibility that Luthuli, whose fields and shop lie on either side of the bridge, crossed the bridge when a train might pass is not as preposterous as Magubane judged it to be.

¹³⁵ "The Legacy of a Legend", 2005.

¹³⁶ "The Legacy of a Legend", 2005.

¹³⁷ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel #1, Andries Pretorius, Inquest Report, Exh. M., Sworn statement dated 25 July 1967.

¹³⁸ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel #1, Eness Mfeka, Inquest Report, Exh. S., Sworn statement dated 25 July 1967.

Magubane's vague reference to some kind of "dissension" that would be created within the liberation movement by Luthuli's death is counter-intuitive. In July 1967, the Sabotage Act silenced Luthuli, at least publicly.¹³⁹ If there was any dissension in the movement previous to Luthuli's death, it likely concerned the issue of violence, though the ANC deliberated and decided on it in July and Mandela implemented it in December 1961. Despite the ANC's resort to violence, Luthuli never advocated violence and continued to consistently argue for militant non-violent resistance. Luthuli's death would not likely create any dissension in the liberation movement. Conversely, Luthuli's death enabled the ANC to consolidate and homogenise a narrative justifying the rationalisation of the ANC's violent policy.

Tambo justified the armed movement and only publicly proclaimed Luthuli's agreement to it *after* Luthuli's death in a press statement dated and/or entitled "July 21 [1967]".¹⁴⁰ This statement served as a veritable call to arms, very revolutionary in tone and focused on an appeal to support the armed struggle utilising the occasion of Luthuli's death as an opportunity to motivate. The statement vigorously defended the ANC's policy on violence, utilising hyperbole and a plethora of absolutes. The use of the word 'revolutionary' throughout the document differs from Luthuli's paradigmatic use of the word in his Nobel lecture. Tambo's 'revolutionary' refers to and assumes the implementation of violence. Contrary to Luthuli's death causing dissension within ANC ranks, the statement reveals that dissension already existed within the ANC *before* Luthuli's death. For example, Tambo fumed:

The enemies of our revolutionary struggle who were bent on fanning divisions inside the ranks of the ANC whilst at the same time making futile attempts to isolate Chief Albert Luthuli from the mainstream of the revolutionary movement, came forth with allegations that Chief Luthuli never approved the change-over from emphasis on non-violent struggle to the present phase.

¹³⁹ *Natal Mercury*, "Luthuli Now Silenced: Vorster Declares Ban", 04 July 1962.

Natal Witness, "Albert Luthuli: Africa's Forgotten Man", by Dennis Royle, 01 May 1964.

Daily News, "May Not Enter Stanger: Stricter Ban on Luthuli", 23 May 1964.

Daily News, "Heavier Ban on ex-Chief Luthuli", 24 May 1964.

Daily News, "Comment on Re-Imposed Luthuli Ban", 26 May 1964.

Daily News, "Luthuli Order Expires in May 1969", 20 June 1964.

¹⁴⁰ UFH, HPAL, ANC, A2561, Box 70, Folder C39, "July 21".

From 1961 to his death, Luthuli never refuted (as he once refuted Jordan Ngubane) the so-called “enemies of the revolutionary struggle” who alleged that he did not support the use of violence. This is the case because Luthuli did not support the violent movement. Neither did Luthuli condemn violence. Until April 1962, Luthuli remained publicly non-violent.¹⁴¹ From April 1962 until his death in July 1967, Luthuli was for the most part silent on the issue of violence. This study argues that the ANC utilised Luthuli’s death to consolidate the arguments for violence and retroactively included him in its support. Luthuli’s death provided the ANC the allowance to be ‘very liberal’ with the truth as it regarded his supposed support of violence. The ANC was always careful never to explicitly state that Luthuli unequivocally supported violence. Instead, the ANC cited Luthuli’s 1964 statement responding to the Rivonia Trial sentences (“No one can blame...”), commentated that “Once the ANC changed its policy to violence, Luthuli did not waver” and issued statements to the effect that his leadership of the ANC which has opted for violence made him a “fearless revolutionary” to directly link him to *MK*.¹⁴² Luthuli’s death, far from engendering division within the ANC, allowed it to homogenise its position on violence, posthumously bringing him into the ideological and ‘revolutionary’ fold. In death, the ANC was safe from Luthuli’s private (for he would not contest in public) rebuttal. Likewise, Luthuli consistently opposed any cooperation with the Apartheid regime through participation in the bantustan structures. Though the Apartheid government, following Luthuli’s death, attempted to convince the public that he was about to make an announcement endorsing the bantustan system, it is unlikely that the government realistically believed that such misinformation would cause any controversy within the ANC ranks on its clear opposition to the government’s divide and rule tactics.¹⁴³ Eliminating Luthuli, rather than cause dissension, could serve as “as inspiration”, inevitably creating cohesion and solidarity within the liberation movement

¹⁴¹ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Our Way is Right – We Must Keep On”, by Albert Luthuli, 25 March 1962.

BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “No Change in Heart among the Whites”, 29 April 1962.

¹⁴² “Chief Albert John Mvumbi Lutuli Isitwalandwe 1898-1967”, *Sechaba* 1, supplement, no. 8, August 1967, 2.

¹⁴³ “The Big Lie Technique: South Africa’s Gestapo Chief, General van den Berg, Who Has Tried to Besmirch the Memory of One of Africa’s Greatest Son, Chief Albert J. Lutuli, Is Proved a Liar”, *Sechaba* 1, no. 10, October 1967, 5.

as it did for the Africa Liberation Centre.¹⁴⁴ The government, in killing Luthuli, would have created a martyr, and a martyr fosters unity, not division. For example, shortly after Luthuli's death, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) stated contradictorily:

For Luthuli we claim no vengeance since his life was priceless, the murderers cannot pay for him with their own lives. It is by blood that we can redeem his life and the lives of those who die for their country...Furthermore, to us all Chief Luthuli is neither dead nor forgotten he lives today more than ever and his murderers will view with dismay the immortality of the victorious spirit of his ideas.¹⁴⁵

The Apartheid government had no reason to counter with death Luthuli's very parsimonious presence. Luthuli's banning effectively rendered him politically impotent. Luthuli could not meet people in groups. With other banned individuals, Luthuli could meet only with great risk and subterfuge. The government effectively silenced Luthuli. Due to the June 1962 prohibition by the Sabotage Act on quoting banned individuals, Luthuli only issued by stealth a few international statements during the remaining five years of his life.

Immediately after receiving news of his death, ANC allies suspected the South African government killed Luthuli. Members of the ANC stoked suspicions by secretly distributing pamphlets countrywide that alleged Apartheid death squads killed Luthuli.¹⁴⁶ ZAPU stated in August 1967:

The sudden death of Chief Albert Luthuli is a great loss not only to the people of South Africa but to all of us who come from Southern Africa. It was during his term of office that an impetus was given to the African nationalist movements in Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique,

¹⁴⁴ UFH, HPAL, ANC, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, correspondence from E. F. Mukuka Nkoloso (H. E. P. R.) of the Africa Liberation Centre, Office of the President to All Fellow Freedom Fighters at the Southern Bureau of Political Affairs, Africa Liberation Centre, 22 July 1967.

¹⁴⁵ UFH, HPAL, ANCA, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, draft speech by the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), July 1967.

¹⁴⁶ Sithole and Mkhize, "Truth or Lies?", 71.

Sechaba also makes reference to these pamphlets, although, the ANC did not mention that the Apartheid regime caused Luthuli's death.

"The Big Lie Technique", *Sechaba* 1, no. 10, October 1967, 5-6.

Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika, Zambia and Malawi. His murderers will be dismayed by the immortality of his noble ideas.¹⁴⁷

The Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) opined that Luthuli died “under very dubious circumstances”.¹⁴⁸ A bizarrely worded tribute from Jacob Kuhangua, Secretary-General of South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) cried:

The treacherous act of brutality, the train that knocked him down, “The NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER” inspired by the hatred and fanaticism against which he fought so hard, has struck down in the flower, a life full of determination, a life full of great achievement, a life full of promise for his country and people and indeed a Son who died for human respect.¹⁴⁹

Students at the Lincoln University in the United States characterised Luthuli’s death as “so shrouded in mystery”.¹⁵⁰ The Mozambique Liberation Front doubted “the information that he was killed by a train. His death, we believe, was a premeditated one”.¹⁵¹ A representative of Algerian National Liberation Front nonsensically believed Luthuli “was assassinated, before having fulfilled his mission: the launching of the armed struggle of liberation”.¹⁵² Within the July 1968 issue of *Sechaba*, N. G. Maroudas submitted a number of poems commemorating Luthuli’s death. One piece cast serious doubt on the accidental nature of Luthuli’s death and with poetic imagery implied the train was the Apartheid state.

Chief, when that train knocked you
down (Was it really an accident? –
“He had been going blind for some time” –

¹⁴⁷ UCT, MAD, LC, BC 1081 / P 28, “In Memory of Chief Albert Luthuli”, *Spotlight on South Africa* 5, no. 30, 05 August 1967, 7.

Also published in *Sechaba* 1 (supplement), no. 8, August 1967.

¹⁴⁸ UFH, HPAL, ANCA, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, “Mr. Masha’s Speech”, Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), handwritten speech, July 1967.

¹⁴⁹ UFH, HPAL, ANCA, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, “Statement by Jacob Kuhangua, the Secretary General of SWAPO”, 24 July 1967.

¹⁵⁰ UFH, HPAL, ANCA, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, correspondence from Sondlo Mhlaba of the African Students at the Lincoln University to the ANC (Dar es Salaam), 27 July 1967.

¹⁵¹ UFH, HPAL, ANCA, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, correspondence from Uria T. Simango, Vice-President of the Mozambique Liberation Front, to the ANC (Dar es Salaam), 22 July 1967.

¹⁵² UFH, HPAL, ANCA, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, draft article by Mohammed Meghraoui, 31 August 1967, 3.

Were you really so blind that you
 could not see it coming?
 Or so deaf that you could not hear
 it coming?
 Or so senile that you didn't have
 enough sense
 To stay out of its way?
 Never mind:
 However blind or deaf you
 might or might not have been then
 You are dead now),
 When your body was finally broken by
 that huge machine,
 That juggernaut of a police state,
 howling along its one way track,
 And your life dripped into the ground,
 Could you, in your last agony, still
 bear to think
 How insolently love had been met with hate:
 The hot grinning hate of masterful men
 Intent on subduing to their lust and
 greed
 The tender human spirit
 Behind the barbed wire of Law and Order.¹⁵³

A year after Luthuli's death, an article entitled "*Somlandela uLuthuli*" found in the ANC bulletin, *Mayibuye*, also implicated the state in his murder.

It is also true that Chief Luthuli was killed, murdered by the vile system of Apartheid and fascism that stalks our country today.¹⁵⁴

Other sources report the theories of conspiracy, yet cast doubt on their validity. The *Dictionary of South African Biography* stated:

On 21/7/1967 [Luthuli] received multiple injuries when he was struck from behind by a train as he was crossing a railway bridge between his shop and his home; he died the same day in hospital. It is almost certain

¹⁵³ Dr. N. G. Maroudas, "In Memoriam: Albert Luthuli", *Sechaba* 2, no. 7, July 1968, 11.

Maroudas also wrote: "Sorry, dead chief, not even your Chief has won that victory yet: Your honoured Nobel Prize was not the prize of peace. To win that real prize it may be one has to use real weapons against real bullets".

¹⁵⁴ T. Makiwane, "*Somlandela uLuthuli*", *Mayibuye* 2, no. 29, 19 July 1968, 2.

that he did not hear the train. This may have been due to defective hearing, or to the fact that he was walking into a strong wind. Some people including members of his family, have suspected foul play, but there is no firm evidence for this whatsoever.¹⁵⁵

Due to Luthuli's banning, the Apartheid government essentially silenced Luthuli, rendering him politically inactive. Hence, there was little, if any, motive for the government to murder an old, partially blind and partially deaf man who could not effectively lead a liberation movement due to the strict terms of his banning. Also, Luthuli never publicly advocated violence; he certainly never incited it. No motive existed for an assassination.

Those who conclude that Luthuli's death was a mystery or the result of a political conspiracy have not formally investigated his murder and/or have not interrogated, and thus cited, the inquest report in detail. The exceptions to this assertion are Rule's biography of Nokukhanya and Charlotte Owen and Peter Corbett's audio-visual documentary on Luthuli.¹⁵⁶ Rule extensively referred to the official inquest report and even pictured its first page in his book.¹⁵⁷ Though Rule referred to the inquest, he conveyed as findings of the inquest conclusions contrary to its contents. For example, Rule wrote that the inquest found Luthuli to have been dragged when there was no testimony to that effect in the inquest.¹⁵⁸ Owen and Corbett carefully studied the inquest and interviewed advocate Andrew Wilson who represented the Luthuli family; they also concluded that "it almost certainly was an accident".¹⁵⁹

Magubane asserted that it "simply does not make sense" that Luthuli would be on the railway bridge while a train was passing.¹⁶⁰ However, Rule's biography included Edgar Sibusiso's attestation that he watched how careful his father positioned himself on

¹⁵⁵ Beyers, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, 4: 331.

The train actually struck Luthuli as he walked toward it and thus faced it head-on.

¹⁵⁶ UHOA, "Mayibuye Afrika".

¹⁵⁷ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 143.

¹⁵⁸ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 142.

Pretorius and Gregersen's testimony contradicts Rule's assertion that it appeared as if Luthuli was dragged. Rule mistook Gregersen's middle names for her surname. Rule also stated that Gregersen "suspects a fracture at the base of the skull and broken ribs" when Gregersen indicated that the fracture of the skull was "visible", hence there was no "suspicion".

¹⁵⁹ *Sunday Tribune Magazine*, "The Chief's Voice Is Heard Again", by Ingrid Shevlin, 18 July 1993, 3.

¹⁶⁰ "The Legacy of a Legend".

the bridge when a train passed: “When a train was coming he would stand, not even walk, and hold onto the railings tightly”.¹⁶¹ A contemporary newspaper article entitled, “24 Inches Away from Death” included a photograph of a man (Mataba) standing on the same footplate upon which Luthuli walked adjacent to a passing train to verify the precariousness of such an event.¹⁶²

Finally, historians ought to report not only understandable suspicions and a possibly suspect inquest report, but also, as is done in this study, investigate medical history to determine the likelihood that a mild stroke may have been sufficient to momentarily disorient, unbalance and generally discombobulate Luthuli enough to cause him not to evade the 10 to 10 and ½ inch overlap of the passing train and the footplate on which he was standing. On the day before Luthuli’s death, Nokukhanya argued she should go to the fields on her husband’s behalf because just the previous day he got “so exhausted” and “looked so tired”.¹⁶³

Conclusion

An archival review revealed that it was not until after Luthuli’s death in 1967 that the ANC implied, projected or articulated that he supported the switch from non-violent to violent resistance. The ANC selectively quoted Luthuli’s statements, for example from the “The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross” (1952), to imply that Luthuli supported the initiation of *MK* when his statement advocated the opposite. The ANC consistently misused Luthuli’s statement in support of Mandela and the others sentenced in the Rivonia Trial (1964) to indicate he supported the armed movement when the very carefully crafted text indicated that he and the ANC had not departed from non-violent methods. Luthuli’s death enabled the ANC to anachronistically morph, incorporate, graft and homogenise perspectives, especially those of Luthuli, into the ANC’s justification for the turn to violence. Mandela’s autobiography enabled post-1994 myths of Luthuli’s support of the decision to form *and* launch *MK* to contradict inaccurate pre-1994 myths that the ANC marginalised him from the decision to form *MK* and the actual reality that

¹⁶¹ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 144-5.

¹⁶² *Sunday Tribune*, “Only 24 Inches from Death...”, 30 July 1967.

¹⁶³ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 140.

Luthuli reluctantly yielded to the decision to form *MK* but objected to the *MK*'s launch. The quintessential myth is that of a martyred revolutionary rather than the tragic accident of a lonely, old and partially blind and deaf man. The former proved more efficacious when justifying the ANC's use of an armed liberation movement.

Karis and Carter accurately reflected the doubts existing about Luthuli's stance on violence. In the section entitled "The Turn to Violence Since May 31, 1961", Karis and Carter commented poignantly on the question upon which this study is focused: "Just how Luthuli's mind worked during these days is uncertain".¹⁶⁴ The following two chapters chronicling the events of 1960 and 1961 focus upon Luthuli and the ANC's turn to violence and more definitively illuminate "how Luthuli's mind worked during these days".

¹⁶⁴ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 649.

Chapter Four

Building Alliances with Sympathetic Whites¹

Need you fear or mistrust people whose greatest desire is to absorb more and more education and Western civilisation? -- Albert Luthuli²

Introduction

In this chapter, Luthuli's biography continues from 1959 where chapter two concluded by chronicling the momentous events of 1960: Sharpeville, the State of Emergency, Luthuli's burning of his pass and the banning of the ANC. This chapter preludes the ANC's 1961 decision to form and launch *MK*. While in custody for much of the year, Luthuli's physical separation from his black colleagues and increasingly close association with many liberal, white and Christian supporters, such as an American Board doctor, liberal politicians, an American Quaker, a Swedish Lutheran and Anglican clerics, led others to perceive that he pandered to white interests rather than to an increasingly militant black constituency. The rapid ascendancy of the PAC's political profile and its harsh criticism of Luthuli and the ANC led his lieutenants to seriously question the predominance and viability of ANC's multiracial and non-violent strategies.

This chapter reveals that the reins of influence within the ANC began to transfer from Luthuli to Sisulu, Nokwe and Mandela in 1960 following the Sharpeville massacre. Furthermore, following the government's ban of the ANC and the arrest of most its members, the ANC and the SACP, for all intents and purposes, fused. The fusion of the two organisations further marginalised Luthuli from the ANC's already drastically circumscribed decision making process. This chapter highlights that had Luthuli known discussions considering violence were taking place between his closest political associates, he would have opposed them on two grounds. First, Luthuli opposed the use of violence on personal grounds based on his Christian convictions. Second, Luthuli opposed the use of violence on practical grounds based on strategic considerations. Both

¹ "Naturally any sympathetic White wants to participate in freeing his countrymen from their present bondage, and to deprive him of this is to make him feel that his stake in the country is questioned". BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "A Message for Black S. A.", by Albert Luthuli, 27 March 1960.

² BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "A Message to White S. A.", by Albert Luthuli, 20 March 1960.

considerations were observed in Luthuli's reliance on white allies who shared his Christian convictions and who were for him the generators of domestic and international advocacy efforts that would eventually and inevitably cause the non-violent overthrow of the Apartheid regime. The events of 1960 engendered a dislocation between a still hopeful and popular Luthuli from the increasingly provoked and pessimistic militants.

Sharpeville

The Treason Trial proceeded during 1959 with only thirty defendants. Paradoxically, though the number of accused decreased during the course of the Treason Trial, its scope became wider. For example, the Trial moved from an intention to prove the accused (Mandela, Conco, Resha and others) intended to act violently against the state to an intention to prove that violence was the ANC's and its allied organisations' collective policy. As the leader of the ANC, Luthuli found himself essentially on trial again though he had been discharged at the end of the preparatory examination. The government adjusted Luthuli's banning so that he could provide evidence at the Trial. The court also called other previously released leaders of the ANC, such as Yengwa and Z. K. Matthews, to testify.

The Treason Trial contained many other paradoxes. Mandela and the other accused could, by being found to adhere to a policy of violence, be guilty of High Treason though the ANC's policy explicitly advocated and implemented only non-violent methods. Mandela and the other accused could be found guilty, not for their own personal intent to act violently but rather, for the ANC's intention to act violently. Mandela and the other accused faced the death penalty while Luthuli, who as the President-General led the ANC, did not because the court discharged him. During the Trial, Luthuli enjoyed the support and succour of liberal Whites and continued to advocate non-violence while some of those who carried out the ANC's non-violent methods faced the possibility of a violent death. While stewing in prison, these paradoxes, combined with Sharpeville and the State of Emergency, could no longer be tolerated by Mandela and others.

While a chronicle of Sharpeville and the State of Emergency and their ramifications is beyond the scope of this investigation, it is important to note that Sharpeville's tragedy initiated the decline of Luthuli's ability to lead the liberation movement.³ The Sharpeville massacre burned into many consciousnesses that non-violence protest would be met by the Apartheid regime with violent and deadly force. When non-violent tactics that are intended to avoid violence actually engender violence, then non-violence loses its philosophical and strategic appeal for the masses and must be preached and demonstrated fearlessly by the leadership. In a February interview with a *Daily Mail* journalist, Luthuli conveyed with prescience the storm on the horizon. In response to the question: "Can the Africans in South Africa achieve their aims without violence?" Luthuli responded, "I hope so. I hope so". Luthuli continued flippantly:

I do not care so much for the Europeans. They have asked for it. But I do not want my own people to commit national suicide. No, I do not want my people to commit suicide. But will they wait? Will they wait?⁴

On 18 March 1960, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), under the leadership of Robert Sobukwe, announced the launch of an anti-pass campaign ten days before an ANC planned anti-pass campaign.⁵ The PAC then invited the ANC to join its campaign. The ANC, through Duma Nokwe, understandably declined, not wishing to abandon

³Other texts have covered Sharpeville in detail.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 329-44.

African National Congress, *African National Congress, South Africa: A Short History* (London: Publicity and Information Bureau of the African National Congress, n.d.), 16-20.

Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 276-300.

Mary Benson, *The African Patriots: The Story of the African National Congress of South Africa* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 267-72.

⁴ *Daily Mail*, "I Go to See the Chief Macmillan Couldn't Visit", by 'Farlie', 10 February 1960.

Daily News, "Luthuli Asks – Can't NATS. Start Talking to Us?", 11 February 1960.

Interestingly, and likely somewhat surprising to some nationalist historians, is that Luthuli disclosed that the attainment of universal national suffrage is "only a long-term aim". Luthuli continued to say that the independence recently gained in the Congo disturbed him. "Their getting their independence so soon (sic); it disturbs me; it is not right".

⁵ The PAC idealistically wished to obtain freedom and independence by 1963.

The ANC has always written in very hostile terms about the PAC's campaign, even blaming the PAC for not "taking every opportunity to avoid giving the trigger-happy South African police a chance for provocation". The ANC accused the PAC of disrupting "completely the highly organised anti-pass campaign of the national organisation which the government really feared – the African National Congress".

ANC, *African National Congress, South Africa: A Short History*, 18.

months of planning for its own incremental campaign on behalf of one that was far more hastily concocted by the PAC. The PAC campaign called for strict non-violence from volunteers who would submit themselves for arrest to protest against the particularly hated pass laws.

The Treason Trial prosecution concluded its case on 10 March 1960. The defence called Conco as its first witness on 14 March. On 21 March, Luthuli took the stand as the second witness. Due to Luthuli's high blood pressure, the court agreed to only be in session during the mornings. While court opened, Sobukwe and a number of others led PAC volunteers to the Orlando police station to submitting themselves for arrest. They were. In Evaton, Langa and Sharpeville the same occurred. In Evaton, roof-top passes by jets broke-up the protest. In Langa, three people were killed and twenty-seven were injured in a baton charge.⁶ The death of sixty-nine and the wounding of one hundred and eighty six in Sharpeville sent shockwaves throughout South Africa and the world. While those who participated in the PAC campaign were shot in the back by white policeman that morning, many South Africans sipped their coffee or tea, newspaper in hand and read a relatively submissive appeal in Luthuli's column.

We cannot manage without the Whites in South Africa. We have accepted your civilisation and we like it, and we are absorbing it as fast as we can – despite the effort of your Government to cut us off from it.⁷

Sisulu's biography indicates that on the eve of Sharpeville, Sisulu, Mandela, Slovo and Nokwe decided to launch a country-wide strike. Then the four consulted Luthuli on their decision. Luthuli consented.⁸ On 24 March, Luthuli declared 28 March to be a National Day of Prayer that would include mourning, protest and a stay-at-home. On 26 March, in an effort to extinguish the volatile situation, the government suspended the pass laws. This suspension was a tactical decision and not a change of policy. On

⁶ ANC, *Afrika Ke Nako: 90 Years of Struggle, A History of the African National Congress 1912-2002* (Marshalltown: ANC), 2002, 16.

⁷ *Golden City Post*, "A Message to White S. A.", by Albert Luthuli, 20 March 1960.

Excerpts from the above article were republished the next morning.

Times, "Leader's Pledge to Whites: 'Nothing to Fear'", 21 March 1960, 9.

Natal Mercury, "Whites Need Not Fear Africans - Luthuli", 19 March 1960.

⁸ Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 140.

27 March, in an effort to ride the wave of protest prematurely catalysed by the PAC, Luthuli publicly burned his pass in an effort to capture for the ANC the country wide feelings of outrage and launch its anti-pass campaign four days early.⁹ Mandela, Sisulu and Nokwe also burnt theirs.

Sobukwe associated a perceived ANC timidity with its liberal alliances and with what was thought to be Luthuli's riding on the PAC's coattails. From prison Sobukwe issued a scathing attack against the ANC and its leader following Luthuli's call for a National Day of Prayer.¹⁰ Sobukwe used euphemisms such as "bosses", "oppressor class" and "white press" for Luthuli's liberal allies.

If evidence of ANC rank opportunism was still required, their call for a day of mourning on 28 March instead of their previously announced coffin-carrying, placard-bearing pass demonstration of 31 March, provides that evidence. The ANC opposed our campaign. It called it sensational, ill-defined and ill planned. We showed them and their bosses that we could plan and run the campaign on our own without the advice and sections of the oppressor class. The ANC is now trying to bask in the sunshine of PAC's successes. Luthuli now has the courage which he has lacked for over twelve years to burn his reference book after passes had been suspended. Supported and boosted by the white press, he has been making one foolish statement after another, pretending that he has a following in the country... Our advice and warning to the ANC and its liberal friends is: Hands off our campaign. We do not need your interference. Go on with your coffin-carrying and other childish pastimes but leave the African people to fight their struggle without you. Tell your bosses you cannot sell the African people because you do not control them.¹¹

The PAC used Luthuli and the ANC's political partnerships with liberals against them and the more impatient of Luthuli's lieutenants therefore felt upstaged and inadequate next to the PAC.

⁹ *Times*, "Terrible Trouble If Pass Laws Are Restored: Move to Ban African Groups to be Discussed Today", 28 March 1960, 10.

The action of burning the pass may have been a game of one-upmanship as the PAC only left their passes at home. Mandela's autobiography incorrectly stated Luthuli burned his pass on 26 March. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 281.

¹⁰ Possibly the only other person other than Champion to have publicly criticised Luthuli was Robert Sobukwe.

¹¹ Pogrand, *How Can a Man Die Better*, 141.

State of Emergency

The National Day of Prayer was the biggest strike in the country's history. On 28 March, the National Party government proposed the Unlawful Organisations Bill; this proposal forecast the imminent banning of the ANC.¹² Though, in general, Luthuli did not approve of sending members of the ANC in to exile, Luthuli decided with others to mandate Tambo to escape from the country and represent the ANC internationally.¹³ On 29 March, the National Executive Committee agreed to move the ANC underground should the ANC be banned. Events continued at a rapid pace.¹⁴ On 30 March, the government made mass arrests authorised by the State of Emergency declared that day while Philip Kgosana, a very young PAC regional secretary, led over 30,000 people to Caledon Square. The government promised Kgosana that if he dismissed the crowd, he would have an audience with the Minister of Justice. Kgosana dismissed the crowd peacefully. When Kgosana and his delegation returned to meet the Minister, they were denied the audience.¹⁵ That day, the government arrested Luthuli, Mandela, Nokwe, Resha and many others in the early morning hours.¹⁶ Luthuli was absent from court on 31 March when the Trial reconvened. During his incarceration, a warder assaulted Luthuli while ascending stairs at the Pretoria Prison causing his colleagues to seethe with anger.

¹² *Times*, "First Reading for Bill to Give Government More Power", 29 March 1960.

¹³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 221, footnote 6.

¹⁴ *Times*, "Renewed African Rioting on Day of Mourning: Churches Burnt in Townships", 29 March 1960, 12.

¹⁵ Joseph Lelyveld provided a moving account of Kgosana's leadership in his Pulitzer Prize winning book. For a brief moment of time that could potentially have turned the course of South African history, Kgosana, a twenty three year old student, held more power in South Africa than Luthuli, Mandela and Sobukwe combined.

Jospeh Lelyveld, *Move Your Shadow: South Africa, Black and White* (New York: Times Books, 1985), 315-29.

¹⁶ The initial arrests proved to be illegal. For this reason, as a formality, the police released the accused for a few seconds and re-arrested them.

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 222.

Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* 284-5.

Luthuli's Pass Burning and Second Incarceration

During the State of Emergency, Sobukwe and Luthuli's ANC lieutenants observed Luthuli's close relationships with those who inspired his allegiance to non-violent methods: white Christian liberals. These relationships incensed the Africanists and diminished the confidence his more militant lieutenants had in him. In his autobiography, Luthuli stressed that when the court called him to give testimony he was domiciled in the home of "white Pretoria friends": the family of Tony Brink, the Chairman of the Liberal Party in Pretoria.¹⁷ Luthuli proudly asserted that the Brink family home distinguished itself "by a complete absence of any hint of colour bar".¹⁸ In Brink's brother John's bedroom, Luthuli burnt his pass on 27 March in solidarity against the massacre at Sharpeville and with the now upstaged ANC anti-pass campaign that had been planned for 31 March.¹⁹ Tony Brink acted as Luthuli's driver for many days, taking him around many townships to initiate and lead pass burning protests. On 30 March, the police arrested Luthuli under the 1960 State of Emergency at the Brink's home. As the police led Luthuli away, the Brink family matriarch rushed after Luthuli worried that he had forgotten his slippers and very concerned that in his prison he "might catch a chill".²⁰

In his autobiography, Luthuli showered the reader with a litany of benevolent, white, liberal and Christian friends and admirers who blessed him with much solidarity, hospitality, love and support. In doing so, Luthuli conveyed that the struggle against the government was multiracial by nature and Christian in character. Luthuli underscored that Whites also suffered and sacrificed to achieve a democratic South Africa. In doing so, Luthuli mentioned by name the Whites who the police also arrested: Colin Lang, a prominent member of the Liberal Party; Mark Nye, an ordained minister who provided

¹⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 221.

¹⁸ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 222.

¹⁹ In a 1993 documentary on Luthuli, Tony Brink amusingly told the story of how the press photographed and published Luthuli burning his pass above an enamel wash basin for which the Special Branch searched. Brink's brother, John, placed his son's soiled nappies in the basin. Their contents prominently displayed, caused much aversion.

UHOA, "Mayibuye Afrika".

In a ceremony on 21 March 1994, Mandela placed the ashes in a Wilgespruit chapel niche.

LM, COCP, correspondence from Tony Brink to Peter Corbett and Charlotte Owen, 14 February 1994.

²⁰ UHOA, "Mayibuye Afrika".

hospitality to the Treason Trial accused; and Hannah Stanton, warden of Tumelong Anglican mission at the Lady Selborne township.

Luthuli makes special mention of those Whites who expressed care and concern: Michael Parkington, a defence attorney who “greatly comforted” Luthuli with his solicitude during those stressful days; M. de Villiers, a doctor who attended to Luthuli’s health with “diligent care” and a “humane manner” and “greatly eased the tension of those days”; Junod, a chaplain to who visited Luthuli and those sentenced to death at the Pretoria Central Prison; and Reynecke, a retired Dutch Reformed Church minister who visited Luthuli twice. The acquaintances were not superficial. For example, Luthuli had known Reynecke since his days on the Christian Council of South Africa.

During the time of his incarceration following the State of Emergency and the burning of his pass and his giving of testimony in court, Luthuli again suffered from his poor medical condition.²¹ His poor health rightfully enabled him to receive “every consideration and indulgence” from the court.²² Nonetheless, the court proceedings tired Luthuli, both physically and emotionally. Luthuli described his initial incarceration as “normal”.²³ Yet, the State of Emergency, Luthuli declining health and efforts by the authorities to seal him off from the other detainees left him isolated. In his cell, Luthuli’s illness kept him confined to bed for most of the day.²⁴ In time, Luthuli was removed to the Pretoria Central Prison’s hospital where he remained throughout his detention.²⁵

In contrast to his first detention during the preparatory examination described by Turok in chapter two, Luthuli provided a more pastoral rather than political role for the other detainees during his second detention. In addition to spending time with the other detainees during their time for exercise for five weeks from the end of June 1960, Luthuli made it a point to be with them on Sundays when he conducted worship services “with a high level of seriousness”.²⁶ After playing the ecclesiastical role, Luthuli was separated

²¹ For example, when remanded on charges of incitement while burning his pass, Luthuli was given permission to remain seated due to the fact that he was a “very sick man”.

Rand Daily Mail, “Luthuli on Remand”, 28 July 1960.

²² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 223.

²³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 223.

²⁴ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 223.

²⁵ *Times*, “Former Chief Luthuli in Hospital”, 23 July 1960, 4.

Times cited “the African newspaper”, *The World*.

²⁶ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 224.

again from his colleagues and became monastic as he made a sanctuary of his cell.

Luthuli contemplated:

Frail man that I am, I pray humbly that I may never forget the opportunity God gave me to rededicate myself, to consider the problems of our resistance to bondage, and above all to be quiet in His Presence. My whitewashed cell became my chapel, my place of retreat.²⁷

During this separation from Luthuli's colleagues, the policy rift from non-violent to violent strategies first emerged. Mandela related in his autobiography how his and others' conditions at the Newlands police station and Pretoria Local Prison were primitive, brutal and uncivilised.²⁸ It would seem only natural that Luthuli's preferential treatment would spawn very different perspectives on the way forward. Various sources, though perhaps differing about the individuals included within the various cliques, confirmed that the preliminary decision to embark upon armed strategies did not include Luthuli. Crucial to Luthuli's exclusion was the separation in prison from his colleagues. Unlike Luthuli's incarceration during the Treason Trial whereby his strong personality, optimism and strong resolve urged all others to gravitate to him as the leader, Luthuli's more comfortable lodging, first before arrest in suburban Pretoria, and second after arrest in a hospital ward, distanced Luthuli from his colleagues' fomenting. From various sources, a pattern emerged. Sisulu remembered in an interview how and when the decision to turn to violence occurred. While in detention between March and August 1960, the same circumscribed collective that included Mandela, Sisulu, Nokwe and Slovo held an all night meeting to plan and propose to Luthuli a response to Sharpeville. These discussions eventually led to their resolution that an armed struggle was the appropriate way forward.

²⁷ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 224.

²⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 283-9.

"We were taken into a tiny cell with a single drainage hole in the floor which could be flushed only from the outside. We were given no blankets, no food, no mats and no toilet paper. The hole regularly became blocked and the stench in the room was insufferable (283)...I do not think that words can do justice to a description of the foulness and filthiness of this bedding. The blankets were encrusted with dried blood and vomit, ridden with lice, vermin and cockroaches and reeked with a stench that actually competed with the stink of the drain" (284).

What we were planning for instance, in jail, is the question of mobilising the entire country. But side by side a small group was working on this question of armed struggle. One meeting took place in jail – quite a big meeting – to discuss the situation.²⁹

While Luthuli prayed and meditated, Mandela and others planned and decided. The “magic circle” of plotters was kept small.³⁰

ANC Banned

In a statement issued on 01 April by an entity calling itself the “Emergency Committee of the ANC”, the ANC still pledged to continue to prosecute the struggle on behalf of the oppressed majority using the “path of non-violent struggle” should the government ban it.³¹ On 08 April the government announced the banning of the PAC and ANC by the authority of the Unlawful Organisations Act. South African Communist Party (SACP) sources offered a narrative of subsequent dynamics parallel to ANC sources. The organisational structure of the ANC was drastically minimised after its banning, thus diminishing Luthuli’s ability to lead; Luthuli considered Nokwe and Mandela “among the foremost leaders of the ANC”.³²

In speaking about the mass arrests following the Sharpeville massacre and the declaration of the State of Emergency, Turok recalled:

Then came the second round of arrests and in that round Rusty [Bernstein] and others were picked-up. They’d been very negligent in my view. They’d been told to be very careful and they’d just sat back and allowed the police to pick them up in their beds. Some of our comrades were really quite reckless, I think, at the time and considering the needs of the movement. As a result the movement was totally decapitated. Just about the whole C[onsultative] C[ommittee] was picked-up except for the blokes in our house and the National Executive of the ANC likewise...The blokes

²⁹ Interview with Sisulu. Cited in:

SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 70-1.

³⁰ SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 72.

³¹ Emergency Committee of the African National Congress, “Statement by the Emergency Committee of the African National Congress”, 01 April 1960. Found in:

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 572-4.

³² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 223.

left behind were Yusuf [Dadoo], Moses [Kotane], Michael [Harmel] and myself, who became as I suddenly discovered to fantastic amazement the Secretariat of the CC and *de facto* leadership of the Alliance at the same time...I then was co-opted formally on the Secretariat and the three of us became the Secretariat of the Party CC and with Yusuf abroad we virtually ran the ANC as well, and the Alliance.³³

Turok explained that the State of Emergency and the subsequent mass arrests drastically curtailed the ANC's 'chain of command'. Restrictive legislation decimated the ANC hierarchy to such an extent that the chain became only one or two links. Since the State of Emergency in 1960, and more so after his return from Oslo just prior to the first acts of sabotage, circumstances omitted Luthuli's placement in the short chain of command. The ANC issued statements, leaflets and policy documents, but apparently without Luthuli's knowledge or approval. Turok recalled:

...documents [and] leaflets which were issued at the time, this was done mainly by Mick [Harmel] and myself, Mick mainly...They were issued by the underground and I might just say in parenthesis that my own view is that towards the end of the Emergency the ANC and the movement as a whole [were] operating far more efficiently than we'd ever done before and this lesson th[at] should have been learned by the movement, that is that a tight structure, well integrated, pushing things from underground is far more efficient than a loose, amorphous mass movement under conditions of oppression.³⁴

The ANC's banning and the resultant constriction of its personnel and democratic processes negatively influenced Luthuli's participation in ANC decisions more than his own did. The truncation of participatory and consensus methods of decision making removed the ideological and administrative foundation upon which Luthuli always led. As a chief within a highly democratic Christian community, Luthuli practiced one style of leadership: 'democratic consensus'. During his young life, Luthuli watched his uncle, Martin Luthuli, perform his chiefly functions democratically. Luthuli treasured the highly democratic ecclesiastic polity of Congregationalism practiced in the faith

³³ UWC, RIMA, MCH 07, 8.4.5, tape 1, interview with Turok, 9-10.

³⁴ UWC, RIMA, MCH 07, 8.4.5, interview with Turok, tape 1, 13.

In general, Turok's 1973 recollections cited here are reiterated accurately in his autobiography. Turok, *Nothing But the Truth*.

community in which he worshiped. Luthuli could not adapt to the 'command and control' leadership required for the context. During his entire Presidency, Luthuli recognised unilateral decision making to be antithetical to the ANC's ethos. For almost twenty years, Luthuli led the struggle for democracy by example. Then, the 1960 State of Emergency forced the ANC to be covert, streamlined, efficient and less democratic. Luthuli's style of leadership, given the new repressive dispensation, became extinct.

ANC members who also belonged to the SACP proved to be more adaptable to changing circumstances. Banned in 1950, the SACP had more experience in operating stealthily and, one might cynically add, with fewer qualms about operating less democratically. Turok's testimony alluded to this possibility. To the question, "The ANC wasn't functioning? At all?" Turok responded tersely:

We were the ANC. Moses was the ANC. It comes down to that, we all participated, there was no distinction, the Alliance was complete. It was one.³⁵

Slovo and Sisulu remembered only Johannesburg based ANC members who "put forward a concrete, consistent line' on armed struggle".

During this period the top working collective of the ANC was situated in Johannesburg and consisted of Kotane, Marks, Mandela, Sisulu, Nokwe and a few others. It was this body, together with the Central Committee of the Party, which took the plunge into the new phase of revolutionary violence.³⁶

Whether it was ANC or the SACP that first decided upon and planned the turn to violence is not relevant to this investigation.³⁷ What is claimed in this investigation is

³⁵ UWC, RIMA, MCH 07, 8.4.5, interview with Turok, tape 1, 17.

³⁶ Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 148.

Interview with Walter Sisulu. Found in:

SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 86.

³⁷ Magubane, Sithole and others do provide an excellent analysis of the parallel events between the SACP and the ANC as regards the turn to violence. The authors rightfully acknowledge the deeply incestuous nature of the two organisations. The authors adeptly conclude that "the South African Communist party took a formal decision to embark on the armed struggle well before the ANC did so". The timing of the two organisations' informal decisions to embark on violence is more difficult to discern. Nonetheless, it is more probable that the SACP also decided informally before the ANC decided informally. SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 80-90.

that Luthuli was *not* an active member of the liberation struggle's leadership after Sharpeville and the subsequent banning of the ANC and the events surrounding the decisions are important to this thesis.

After a recess due to the State of Emergency, the Treason Trial resumed on 19 April.³⁸ Due to Sharpeville and the draconian measures taken by the state to stifle opposition, Nokwe is said to have commented bitterly to Helen Joseph, "This trial is out of date".³⁹ Despite the fact that much of the Trial focused on the ANC and its non-violent strategy, Sisulu recalled that the planning for a violent struggle began long before the court's verdict.⁴⁰ The context of the next phase of the struggle had been inaugurated with the state's violent suppression of non-violent tactics. Luthuli's non-violent strategies had come to be considered "relics of a past era" before the Trial concluded.⁴¹ Luthuli did not see the trial or his non-violent strategies as 'relics of a past era'. Whereas Sisulu, Mandela and others believed the struggle's tactics to be conditional upon the antagonists' tactics, Luthuli believed the tactics of liberation to be conditional upon the solidarity, support, sympathy and action of existing and potential enlightened and progressive allies in the struggle. For Sisulu and Mandela and others, violence against the violent antagonist became the only option.⁴² For Luthuli, violence would only further enrage the antagonist and justify its violence as the state's brutality could be portrayed in the court of public opinion as self-defence. Luthuli feared that worse than this, violence initiated by the liberation movement would neutralise, if not reverse, the support given to the liberation movement from domestic and international white, liberal and Christian allies. Luthuli felt that the key to an ultimate democratic victory depended upon the

³⁸ Karis and Carter stated, "[on 30 March] the three man special criminal court adjourned and did not meet again until late in April".

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 345.

Elinor Sisulu indicated the trial resumed 19 April.

Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina*, 141.

Mandela indicated the trial resumed on 26 April.

Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 291.

³⁹ Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina*, 141.

⁴⁰ SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 86.

⁴¹ Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 141.

Sisulu cited:

Helen Joseph, *If This Be Treason* (London: André Deutsch, 1963), 21.

Hilda Bernstein, *The World That Was Ours: The Story of the Rivonia Trial* (London: SA Writers, 1989), 20.

⁴² ANC, *African National Congress, South Africa: A Brief History*, 19.

recruitment of allies by moral authority. Whereas Mandela, Sisulu and others saw Sharpeville as justification to initiate violence, Luthuli viewed Sharpeville as a tremendous opportunity to boost international and domestic solidarity with the liberation movement and to enhance the moral authority of the ANC. To the same degree that the Apartheid regime became an international pariah, the ANC could become a saint.⁴³ It must be remembered that Luthuli won *the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize*, though he received it in December 1961. The non-violent manner of protest following the violent repression by the Apartheid state at Sharpeville catapulted Luthuli (and the ANC) to the Nobel Peace Prize short-list. As early as November 1960, the press reported Luthuli's candidacy for the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize.⁴⁴ Luthuli's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize loomed behind his consistent argumentation against violence. Luthuli was well aware that in India's fight for liberation from British rule, non-violent tactics prior to and following most violent repressive acts earned the Indian independence movement its greatest international public relations victories. These victories ultimately forced the British to grant Indian independence in 1947.

Treason Trial Testimony

Evidence suggests that in South Africa the non-violent strategies worked. Sharpeville devastated the Johannesburg Stock Exchange like no act of sabotage ever did. On 22 March the United States State Department condemned Pretoria's heavy-handed tactics for the first time. In a 01 April resolution, the United Nations Security Council called on South Africa to change its policies.⁴⁵ International opprobrium and economic isolation became a realistic and near possibility if the state continued to resort to violence and the liberation movement remained non-violent. Economics, international

⁴³ In the wake of Sharpeville, even *Die Burger* confessed that "South Africa has become the polecat of the world".

⁴⁴ *Star*, "Nobel Prize: More Support for Luthuli", 02 November 1960.

⁴⁵ The vote was 9 to 0 with Great Britain and France abstaining. The United Nations called upon South Africa "to initiate measures aimed at bringing about racial harmony based on equality". Benson, *Nelson Mandela*, 85.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 336.

Karis and Carter cited:

Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 299-300.

condemnation and domestic non-violent mass action would bring down the Apartheid regime, not a guerrilla movement that could not even enter the country or penetrate the frontline states. In their Treason Trial testimony that followed the Sharpeville massacre, Luthuli and Z. K. Matthews conveyed optimism that “pressure” would topple white supremacy.⁴⁶ Z. K. Matthews testified:

Our optimism was based upon the fact that this is not the only government that has been relentless in the history of political struggle...⁴⁷

Z. K. Matthews continued that others had been determined not to capitulate to attempts made by their oppressed subjects, “and they have subsequently done so”.⁴⁸ As this study earlier asserts, Z. K. Matthews cited the example of India and posited that “governments usually act as a result of pressure”.⁴⁹ Luthuli held the same opinion in court. When asked by Prosecutor Trengove:

Mr. Luthuli, I also want to put it to you that you never expected that the white oppressor would ever accept your demands and concede to your demands?⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 345.

Luthuli's excerpts from Luthuli's testimony, sourced from Karis and Carter can also be found in an ANC website:

ANC, “Albert Luthuli – Various Items”, www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/lutuli/lutuli8.html, 6-12, accessed 04 April 2008.

Sharpeville “interrupted” Luthuli's Treason Trial testimony. I surmise that Luthuli's testimony regarding the use of violence occurred *after* Sharpeville. Mandela stated that Luthuli's testimony lasted “several days and he was cross-examined for nearly three weeks”. Conco as the lead witness began on 14 March. If Conco testified for a week, then Luthuli could have only testified for a day or two previous to Sharpeville, this leaving the bulk of his testimony and cross-examination for “three weeks” after Sharpeville. Luthuli was arrested for burning his pass on 30 March and was unavailable for court on 31 March. Following the State of Emergency, the court went into recess. Mandela says that Luthuli “returned to testify a month later”, presumably on 19 April. Therefore, Luthuli's comments on non-violence before Sharpeville remained consistent with those made after Sharpeville.

Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 277-8.

⁴⁷ Benson, *The African Patriots*, 283.

⁴⁸ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 618 and 626. Karis and Carter cited: Treason Trial Record, 17,953-58.

Benson, *The African Patriots*, 283.

⁴⁹ Benson, *The African Patriots*, 283.

⁵⁰ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 592 and 626. Karis and Carter cited: Treason Trial Record, 13,758-9.

Benson, *The African Patriots*, 283.

Luthuli responded:

My lords, I wouldn't be in Congress if I didn't expect that white South Africa would someday reconsider. That is my honest belief, and one has grounds for it. I think I have already indicated them, but I firmly believe that white South Africa will one day reconsider. When, my lords, I cannot say.⁵¹

As chapter three discusses, central to the ANC nationalist history assertion that Luthuli supported the initiation of violence is the claim that Luthuli was not a pacifist. During Luthuli's testimony in the Treason Trial, Luthuli affirmed this claim. In response to the lordship's direct question, "Are you a pacifist?" Luthuli responded equally directly, "No, I'm not". The exchange continued, "Then perhaps you might explain the position, the difference between the non-violence campaign and your not being a pacifist." Luthuli retorted, "My lords, I merely talk as one feels – I'm not conversant with [the] theory of pacifism, but I am not a pacifist".⁵² Also in court testimony during the Treason Trial, Luthuli answered questions related to the ANC's then policy of 'tactical pacifism'.

Court: As far as you personally are concerned, would you be party to violent struggle to achieve your aims?

Luthuli: In the circumstances that obtain in the country (sic) – I must say this first – I may have indicated that there might be differences of point of view among different members, but as far as the [C]ongress is concerned, in the circumstances that obtain definitely we are for non-violence (sic). When it comes to a personal level, as to whether at any time one would, I would say that if conditions are as they are, I would never be a party to the

⁵¹ Benson, *The African Patriots*, 283.

⁵² Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 157. Pillay excerpted from:

Chief Albert Luthuli's evidence at the Treason Trial (August 1958 - March 1961) dealing with his understanding of a non-violent liberation struggle.

Was Luthuli evasive in his rationale for his beliefs or was he genuine by intimating his lack of academic or ethical inquiry into 'pacifism' as it relates to a field of study or school of thought and non-violence as it relates to the Christian scriptures and Christian ethics? It is highly unlikely that Luthuli would have neglected to investigate the matter given his ecclesiastical upbringing in mission churches and schools, his trip to Madras, India in 1938 (on the eve of World War II), his tour of the United States in 1948 (between WWII and the Cold War) and the central role Luthuli and the ANC made non-violence in the struggle for liberation.

use of violence because I think it would be almost national suicide, in the circumstances as they are.

Court: And quite apart from that point of view, what would you say with regard to your own beliefs?

Luthuli: My own beliefs as I have already said are to a certain extent motivated by Christian leanings. Because of my Christian leanings I would hesitate to be a party to violence, my lords. But, of course, I must say in that connection that I am not suggesting that the Christian religion says this and that I am not a theologian, but my own leanings would be in that direction.

Court: Have you at any level of the [ANC] heard a suggestion that the policy [of non-violence] should be changed?

Luthuli: My lords, I've never heard any such suggestion, nor a whisper to that effect.⁵³

Court: As far as you personally are concerned, what would be your attitude if such a suggestion were made?

Luthuli: I would oppose it.

Court: Why?

Luthuli: Well, I would oppose it on two grounds really: firstly, from a personal angle, but also because it's not – or it would not be – in the interest of the liberation movement, it would not be a practical thing...

Court: ...Why is it that from time to time, if that is the accepted policy, one finds at meetings reference to your non-violent policy; why should it be necessary to do that?

Luthuli: Well, it is very necessary that we should do so, firstly because in so far as we are concerned we are embarking on something which people may not be fully acquainted with, so that our task is to educate our own members and the African people. Then, of course, the other reason is that we so believe in it that we feel that we should take no chance of anybody not knowing and being tempted to deviate...⁵⁴

⁵³ Luthuli may be contradicting himself here as earlier he stated, '...there may be differences of point of view [regarding violent struggle] among different members...' (see above).

⁵⁴ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 152 and 163.

This statement and others to the same effect uphold the ANC's view that Luthuli was not a pacifist.⁵⁵ In his testimony, Luthuli made a distinction between pacifism and non-violent strategy. He reasoned that pacifists refused to use violence in the case of self-defence whereas adherents to non-violence did not necessarily prohibit violent self-defence in the event of a violent attack.⁵⁶

The court found Luthuli guilty of burning his pass and the government lifted the State of Emergency at the end of August. The authorities released Mandela and the others; they went home for the first time since their arrest five months prior.⁵⁷ In September, Luthuli received a 'lesser' sentence of a £100 fine and six months in jail suspended for three years on the condition that he was not convicted of a similar charge during that period. The sentence likely took into consideration Luthuli's "serious heart ailment", "limited life expectancy" and prior detention since March 1960.⁵⁸

Enriching Friendships

The "white ladies" from the Black Sash revealed that they had paid Luthuli's fine.⁵⁹ Luthuli's "Black Sash friends" then took him to the Anglican St. Benedict's Retreat House in Johannesburg.⁶⁰ The Black Sash supported non-violent direct action. Luthuli's sympathy with and sensitivity to this particular constituency is relevant when querying his motivations for not supporting the ANC's move to violence. In a discussion paper to the Transvaal Black Sash, Joyce Harris articulated what she understood to be the core values of Black Sash. She made her position in the context of a debate beginning within the Black Sash that acts of protest by the oppressed majority, even if technically unlawful, should not be characterised as "lawlessness". Harris disagreed with this

Pillay identified "the records of the Treason Trial" as his source for these excerpts.

Indeed, that which Luthuli feared in his Treason Trial testimony would happen: leaders would be "tempted to deviate" shortly thereafter or unbeknownst him, already were "tempted to deviate".

⁵⁵ *The Star* once incorrectly identified Luthuli as a pacifist.

Star, "Albert Luthuli – Martyr or Tool of Communism?", 22 July 1972.

⁵⁶ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 277.

⁵⁷ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 299.

⁵⁸ *Times*, "£100 Fine on Luthuli: Burning of a Pass Book", 01 September 1960, 9.

⁵⁹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 225.

⁶⁰ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 225.

qualification and held “lawlessness” to be unconditional. She asserted the purpose of the Black Sash was to:

...promote justice and the principles of parliamentary democracy and to seek constitutional recognition and protection by law of human rights and liberties for all...If there is ever to be some sort of reasonable way of life for everyone in our country, I believe it is absolutely imperative that the values for which the Black Sash has always stood should somehow remain intact. They won't if we compromise them.⁶¹

Furthermore, Harris perceived that the “liberation struggle”, as it was termed, implied “the struggle to overthrow the government by violent means”. Harris stated the Black Sash was not, nor should it be, a part of the “liberation struggle”. Harris affirmed the role of Black Sash's role as follows:

...that of trying to be a mediator, a peacemaker, an upholder of justice, a guardian of the principles for which we have always stood in a society which is fast becoming brutalised. In the “liberation struggle” we would soon be lost.⁶²

During this time, Luthuli's reputation within some sectors of the liberation movement deteriorated further. Luthuli's autobiography noted that on the advice of his lawyers and due to concern for his health, he reluctantly did not issue a prepared statement to the court after having been found guilty of burning his pass wherein he concluded:

It is my firm belief that it is the duty of all right-thinking people, black and white, who have the true interest of our country at heart, to strive for [the abolition of the pass] without flinching.⁶³

⁶¹ UCT, MAD, LC, Jo MacRobert Papers (BC 1165, C2), Joyce Harris, “The Black Sash: Discussion Paper”, n.d., 1-2.

⁶² UCT, MAD, LC, BC 1165, C2, Joyce Harris, “The Black Sash: Discussion Paper”, n.d., 2.

⁶³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 246. Also found at:

ANC, “Albert Luthuli – Various Items”, www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/lutuli/lutuli8.html, accessed 04 April 2008, 13-4.

By not issuing the statement, Luthuli impressed that he was not as resolved against the government as when he issued his “The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross” statement subsequent to his dismissal from the chieftaincy. One surmises that those more militant perceived as a failure of leadership Luthuli’s reluctance to further antagonise the, or his, situation.

Following the Defiance Campaign, the ANC membership unceremoniously replaced Moroka with Luthuli for obtaining his own legal council and for relying on his relationships with Whites who testified to his good character and benevolence.⁶⁴ These actions and associations raised the ire of the ANCYL, proved to be an embarrassment to the ANC and rendered Moroka expendable. After Sharpeville and the State of Emergency, Luthuli’s compromises made him susceptible to suffering Moroka’s fate. During a time of heightened anxiety when the PAC captured the public’s imagination at the ANC’s expense, many viewed Luthuli as too close to white liberal Christians. Shortly after police gunned down unarmed protestors at Sharpeville and while militant domestic and continental pan-African nationalism increased in popularity, many within and outside the ANC considering violent methods viewed Luthuli’s comments and company with suspicion. Luthuli’s preferential treatment by the authorities during the Trial due to his ill-health sequestered him from his colleagues and decreased the sense of solidarity that existed previously between him and his co-accused in 1956.⁶⁵

Appreciated by Luthuli in his autobiography and reported in the press, was Canon John Collins, Chairman of Christian Action, who, as a major financial supporter of the Treason Trial Fund, reimbursed the Black Sash for the payment of his fine.⁶⁶ By the end of the Trial, Christian Action raised more than £70,000 for the “best possible legal defence for the accused and aid for their dependents”.⁶⁷ In 1958, the Treason Trial Fund then became the Defence and Aid Fund. In his autobiography, Luthuli congratulated the Defence and Aid Fund, founded by Bishop Ambrose Reeves and administered by

⁶⁴ As a medical doctor, Moroka treated some white patients. Moroka also sponsored educational bursaries for some white children.

⁶⁵ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 223-4.

⁶⁶ *Times*, “£100 Sent to Pay Fine on Luthuli”, 02 September 1960, 5.

Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 226.

⁶⁷ L. John Collins, “Defense and Aid Fund”, *Sechaba* 1, no. 1, January 1967, 11.

Mary Benson and Alex Hepple, for work well done. A total of more than £500,000 was collected and distributed “for the provision of legal defence for the accused and aid for the dependents of a person or persons charged with any political offence under racially discriminating legislation”.⁶⁸ In her hagiography about Luthuli, Mary Benson indicated that Luthuli came to regard Bishop Reeves “really as father” after having met him and having gotten to know him during the Treason Trial.⁶⁹ Benson indicated that Luthuli greatly admired Michael Scott, Trevor Huddleston and Canon Collins for their contribution to the Christian church as well as to the African people. Finally, on his way home from the Treason Trial to resume his ban in Groutville, Luthuli mentioned that he was the guest of an American Board medical missionary, Alan Taylor, superintendent at McCord Hospital.⁷⁰ Luthuli began the epilogue to his autobiography, “If friendships make a man rich, then I am rich indeed”.⁷¹

Though the friendships made Luthuli rich, they also may have nudged his marginalisation from effective leadership within the ANC. Judging from newspaper accounts and from his autobiography, Luthuli surrounded himself with eminent and liberal white supporters. The ANC Youth League (ANCYL) had a track-record of constitutional *coups* against former President-Generals Xuma and Moroka for their failures to lead militantly. As mentioned earlier, during the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960 Luthuli was staying as a guest at the home of Tony Brink, Chairperson of the Liberal Party. Due to his ill health, Luthuli received preferential treatment while in custody, separated from his other ANC colleagues who endured deplorable conditions. Following the burning of his pass, Luthuli made public that it was “white ladies” of the Black Sash who paid his £100 fine. Luthuli elected to not issue a public statement on his pass burning. It was public knowledge that Luthuli convalesced during the Trial at an Anglican retreat centre.

Given the history of the ANCYL and the ANC, the increasing prominence of the PAC and the perceived futility of non-violent demonstration, many perceived Luthuli to be too compromised by his fair-skinned ecclesiastic liberal supporters and thus obsolete.

⁶⁸ L. John Collins, “Defense and Aid Fund”, *Sechaba* 1, no. 1, January 1967, 11.

⁶⁹ Benson, *Chief Albert Lutuli of South Africa*, 63.

⁷⁰ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 226.

⁷¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 227.

For example, Mary-Louise Hooper, a wealthy white American Quaker widow, immigrated to South Africa in 1955, bought a home near Durban and worked for two years as Luthuli's secretary and personal assistant.⁷² Hooper even donated an Austin car to Luthuli.⁷³ She became attached to the Luthuli family, moved into the Mahomed family's "outhouse" ("for a long period, probably about a year"⁷⁴) and befriended many other ANC leaders.⁷⁵ In 1957, the government arrested Hooper then imprisoned and deported her from South Africa.⁷⁶ Hooper boasted an impressive résumé for the ANC.⁷⁷ The ANC elected her as its first white member in 1959 and appointed her to represent the ANC at three All-African People's Conferences in Accra (1958), Tunis (1960) and Cairo (1961).⁷⁸ Subsequent to her return to the United States in 1958, Hooper served the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), an organisation founded by pacifists that emphasised the utilisation of non-violent methods to create social change. Hooper voluntarily worked full-time as the West Coast Representative of ACOA's Africa Defence and Aid Fund. Hooper's largesse helped to financially support not only the

⁷² The ANC elected Secretaries (for example, Yengwa and Selborne Maponya) to administrate Luthuli's affairs as they related to the Congress activities. Mary-Louise Hooper, Jean Hill and Mary Benson are also identified as Luthuli's secretaries. Oddly, Yengwa rarely, and Maponya almost never, appear in documentary archives.

Ebrahim Mahomed and Goolam Suleman served as an accountant and secretary, respectively.

⁷³ LM, "Sharing a Little of E. V. and Chief's Life Story by Mr. Yunus Mahomed", presented at the Luthuli Museum, Groutville, for "International Day for Sharing Life Stories", 15 May 2008, 2.

⁷⁴ LM, Ebrahim Vally Mahomed Papers (EVMP), deposition from Yunus Mohamed to the Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee that his father be "honoured in some way for their lifetime contribution to the cause of freedom", 20 May 1997, 2.

⁷⁵ LM, "Sharing a Little of E. V. and Chief's Life Story by Mr. Yunus Mahomed", 2.

⁷⁶ Hooper subsequently sued the government and won. The government paid her a hefty £1,700 on a technicality that found her detention unlawful. Hooper donated the amount to a very appreciative ANC. ANC, "Testimony on Mrs. Marie (sic) Louise Hooper Before the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, New York, 29 May 1967", 4 and 7. Found at: <http://www.anc.org.za/un/hooper05-67.html>, accessed 21 March 2008.

In this document her first name was incorrectly recorded as "Marie".

⁷⁷ ANC, E. S. Reddy, ed., "Chief Luthuli and the United Nations", 2. www.anc.org.za/un/reddy/cluthuli.html, accessed 20 March 2008.

Reddy indicated that Hooper met Luthuli while she visited South Africa in 1956 with a tour group.

⁷⁸ This claim that the ANC elected Hooper as its first white member is dubious. As the ANC allowed only black members at the time and as membership in the ANC was voluntary (rather than elected), it is likely that the ANC awarded Hooper with a 'honorary' membership.

Aluka, from Africa Action Archive, "About Mary-Louise Hooper, 1961", by the American Committee on Africa, 100. Found at:

www.aluka.org/action/showMetadata?doi=10.5555/AL.SFF.DOCUMENT.acoa000261, accessed 13 June 2008.

Hooper's election to the ANC in 1959 is also found in two ANC sponsored websites:

ANC, "Chief Luthuli and the United Nations", 2.

"Testimony on Mrs. Marie (sic) Louise Hooper Before the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts", 1.

ANC but also the Luthuli family for discretionary or emergency purposes.⁷⁹ Luthuli personally invited Hooper to be a member of Luthuli's staff in Oslo, Norway when he received the Nobel Peace Prize. Luthuli's relationship with Hooper is another link with non-violent allies that he would not disappoint.

After the ANC's banning, ANC members such as Mandela and Sisulu began seriously contemplating violence as a means toward liberation. Independent African countries had difficulty with the ANC's 'South African exceptionalist' doctrine. Repudiating it, the PAC filled the solidarity niche, leaving the ANC isolated. This dynamic is seen when in early 1962 Mandela embarked upon a whirlwind tour of independent African states, hoping to drum up support for the ANC and in so doing thwart the PAC's diplomatic monopoly maintained by its anti-ANC propaganda. In Ethiopia, Mandela also received eight weeks of military training to qualify him as a Commander-in-Chief.⁸⁰ During this trip, Mandela felt the ANC's need for pan-African assistance and that support could not be surrendered to the new PAC upstart. Mandela returned to Natal and proposed a more Africanist stance within the ANC (although in London when trying to convince Yusuf Dadoo, he qualified the proposed change as one of "image" and not "policy")⁸¹. Luthuli brushed the proposal aside, indicating the ANC had chartered a given course for many decades. African leaders with pan-African ideologies that dismiss the 'South African exceptionalist' condition were not going be allowed to "dictate" ANC policy.⁸²

Tambo also converted to certain aspects of the pan-African ideology; he had to. The ANC appointed Tambo to establish the ANC in exile, preferably in Africa, and more preferably in what would become known as the Frontline States bordering South Africa. Initially Tambo ascribed to the 'South African exceptionalist' paradigm. Those who subscribed to the 'South African exceptionalist' paradigm figured that a violent conflict in South Africa would be catastrophic due to the permanency of both combatants and

⁷⁹ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel # 1, correspondence from Luthuli to Mary-Louise Hooper, 02 July 1956, 3.

In this correspondence, Luthuli asked Hooper: "I am wondering, dear friend, if in this regard you could allow us to use the money you sent to Nok for emergency to be used in putting all my lands under cane[?]"

⁸⁰ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 362-3.

⁸¹ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 361-2.

⁸² Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 370-1.

would leave decades, if not centuries, of mistrust between them. For this very reason, Tambo was “very upset” by and “opposed” the decision taken to embark upon violence, even writing a correspondence to the South African leadership questioning the decision.⁸³ Only when Mandela visited Tambo in Tanzania and convinced him of the ANC’s isolation in South Africa due to its illegal status and its increasing marginalisation in Africa due to the rising popularity of the PAC, did Tambo acquiesce to the use of violence.⁸⁴ Tambo converted to an Africanist-leaning position because of his exile. Luthuli, who remained in South Africa, held fast to a ‘South African exceptionalist’s’ understanding and its consequential non-violent methods for achieving liberation.⁸⁵

The Africanists’ secession influenced Mandela in another manner. The Africanists drew their ideology from Anton Lembede who was the precursor to Steve Biko’s Black Consciousness Movement. Lembede maintained, and the PAC resurrected, the idea that the ANC’s multiracial approach confused the masses and “de-fused” their latent nationalist sentiments. Multi-racial alliances were perhaps appropriate for the educated and elite Blacks, but the masses who had little if any ‘racial-esteem’ for themselves, would never erupt and revolt in the manner that the PAC envisioned if in their perception their black leadership was dependent upon white and Indian guidance and trusteeship. Cooperation with other races, constitutional strategies, incremental and compromising goals and a constant harping on non-violent strategies not only lacked

⁸³ Interview with Joe Matthews. Found in:

SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 90.

Callinicos stated the exact opposite: “Tambo was well aware of the discussions going on inside South Africa and was neither disturbed nor surprised by the turn of events”.

Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 281.

⁸⁴ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 283.

Within Callinicos’ text lies a silence. Between Callinicos’ account of the launch of *MK* and Mandela’s visit to Tambo in Tanzania, Tambo’s profound reservations and opposition to the turn to violence was not mentioned. Callinicos wrote that only Mandela’s visit and persuasive argument convinced Tambo to change his position on an issue as fundamental as violence (284). According to the stewards of Mandela’s historical legacy, Luthuli also reconciled himself to the turn to violence when Mandela personally persuaded him. I assert that such characterisations are simplistic and mask the high degree of contestation that characterised the decision to embark upon violence.

⁸⁵ The ANC in the later 1960s grudgingly accepted the South African exceptionalist doctrine: “South Africa’s social and economic structure and the relationships which it generates are perhaps unique...What makes the structure unique and adds to its complexity is that the exploiting nation is not, as in the classical imperialist relationships, situated in a geographically distinct mother country, but is settled within the borders”.

African National Congress, *Forward to Freedom: Documents on the National Policies of the African National Congress of South Africa*, (Morogoro: ANC, n.d.).

sufficient emotional appeal to stir the masses, but they anesthetised them, lulling them into a stupor and making them ripe for white supremacists' abuses.

Luthuli's close associations with white Christian liberals did not compromise his political decisions; they did, however, make it exceedingly difficult to retreat from them. Black Sash's payment of Luthuli's fine did not later obligate him to refuse to support violence. Luthuli's stay in the Brinks' home and his friendship with Anglican clerics did not render him a puppet or sell-out to white liberal interests. Luthuli's physician and friend, American Board doctor Alan Taylor, did not enforce any *quid pro quo* covenant regarding political policy and medical care. Though Hooper donated money and a vehicle to the Luthuli family, he was not ideologically indebted to her or to the ACOA. Rather, Luthuli's personal views concerning the use of violence resonated with the views of his political and spiritual benefactors and his views on the use of violence combined with his allegiance and respect for those of the same spirit dissuaded him from 'converting' to the use of violence as did Mandala, Tambo, Kotane, Yengwa, Nokwe and others.

When an opportunity arose to pressure Luthuli to bow to white liberal Christian political concerns in return for political solidarity, funds or friendship, Luthuli firmly declined. For example, a lengthy correspondence dated 02 July 1956 to Luthuli from Mary-Louise Hooper, showed that Luthuli could remain steadfast to his convictions.⁸⁶ In previous correspondences before the Treason Trial, Hooper suggested to Luthuli that the ANC consider disposing of its attorneys with left wing or Communist sympathies. Luthuli perceived that Hooper suggested that funds for defence lawyers could be better procured if those lawyers were not Communists. Not wishing to jeopardise his relationship with Hooper or the funds she raised and donated, Luthuli considered the matter very seriously in his correspondence to her and laboriously explained the non-viability of changing defence attorneys. Demonstrating his democratic nature, Luthuli discussed Hooper's proposal confidentially with Yengwa and Letele. All three arrived at an understanding that Luthuli articulated to Hooper. First, Luthuli carefully explained that the ANC National Working Committee and the National Executive Committee

⁸⁶ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, reel #1, correspondence from Luthuli to Hooper, 02 July 1956, 2.

determined the selection of attorneys. Luthuli confided that he “could bring [his] opinion and weight to bear on the consideration of any new attorneys or advocates if a need arose but the decision would be a majority decision of the Executive or the Working Committee”. Luthuli made it clear that a change must be made for “good reason” and that he knew of no valid reason to create a crisis in either body. Second, Luthuli intimated that since the Defiance Campaign, the ANC utilised the services of the best attorneys, regardless of their political leanings. Luthuli argued that “only professional ability and sympathy with the cause should be our CRITERION” (Luthuli’s emphasis). Luthuli made a rarely articulated confession when he wrote “I do not like Communists”, but continued to focus on principles, “but it would look strange that we work with [the] Congress of Democrats that is predominantly – not wholly – leftist and make an issue of leftism when it comes to a purely professional matter where such consideration should come least”. Third, Luthuli qualified that not all the lawyers were Communist. Many were non-leftists. Fourth, Luthuli revealed that in South Africa the legal society did not discriminate against leftist or ex-Communist members of the bar. Fifth and finally, Luthuli explained to Hooper that it was crucial to hire lawyers sympathetic to the cause with a sound political background in the struggle. Luthuli clearly stated that he hoped Hooper did not make attorneys’ political views a condition for the donation of funds. Luthuli closed frankly:

I hope you are not feeling so strongly on this matter as to make it a condition of your giving us the money you are raising. I would inform you as a friend that I would not refer this matter to colleagues in the Executive until I know what your attitude is after this lengthy explanation. If you should have strings tied to the donation, I am afraid – but in all honesty I must tell you – that the ANC would regretfully decline it. God knows that we appreciate your services very much and we need every penny of the money you may raise but it must not be under conditions that humiliate us and do harm to our panel of defence lawyers in order to qualify for donation from our rightist friends. My policy is that we must make friends from both the West and the East and take from each what is good for us so long as we are not called upon to violate the principles on which we are prosecuting our Freedom Struggle.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47 (CAMP MF 2914), reel #1, correspondence from Luthuli to Hooper, 02 July 1956, 3.

On 31 August, the government lifted the State of Emergency. September through December proved less climactic after the electrifying events of March. In September, the ANC's National Executive met and resolved to continue the struggle underground. The government's more repressive laws rendered the ANC's highly democratic constitution and President-General inoperable. Mandela explained that the ANC as a whole had to be streamlined.⁸⁸ Conferences, branch meetings and public gatherings could no longer be held. The ANC National Executive dissolved subordinate entities such as the Youth League and the Women's League despite their resistance and even disobedience.⁸⁹ The political context forced the ANC to operate illegally and thus clandestinely. It was agreed that Mandela would operate full-time underground and activate the M-Plan (Mandela Plan), formulated in the early 1950s in case the state banned ANC. The M-Plan depended upon 'cells' of ten households and 'zones' of cells that would report to local branches. With this organisational structuring, decisions made by the leadership could be efficiently directed to the constituency.⁹⁰

Z. K. Matthews, the final defence witness, began his testimony in the Treason Trial in October 1960. On 05 October, white South Africans voted in a referendum to become a republic. In November, the government declared a State of Emergency in eastern Pondoland and other areas of the Transkei due to violent unrest. The repressive measures in Pondoland were the last events that Luthuli commented upon in the epilogue of his autobiography and hence one can safely conclude that during the beginning of 1961 Luthuli completed the dictation of his autobiography to his amanuenses, Charles and Sheila Hooper.⁹¹ The Hoopers added to an already very long list of white, liberal and ecclesiastic friends and thus reinforced a prominent Christocentric thesis of this study.

⁸⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 301.

⁸⁹ SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 75.

⁹⁰ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 166-9.

⁹¹ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 228.

Charles and Sheila Hooper are no relation to Mary-Louise Hooper. Luthuli appreciated their assistance in the writing of his autobiography in his preface (xxv-xxvi). An Anglican priest, Charles served a parish near Zeerust and wrote the very moving book *Brief Authority* about the Apartheid regime's oppression of indigenous people. Charles wrote the book in the same spirit as Trevor Huddleston who authored *Naught for Your Comfort* following the forced removals from Sophiatown. Charles Hooper, *Brief Authority* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960).

Luthuli characterised his relationship with them in much the same manner as he did with dozens of others:

...out of our first meeting there has grown up a deep and abiding friendship, born of a common outlook in facing the tragedy threatening our common homeland, and a common belief in the relevance of the Christian Faith to our problems and needs, however complex.⁹²

In November 1960, the press began to report nominations for Luthuli to win the Nobel Peace Prize.⁹³ A former Swedish missionary with the Church of Sweden Mission, Gunnar Helander, led these advocacy efforts. While serving the Natal Missionary Conference and the South African Institute of Race Relations, Luthuli began a long friendship with Helander. Helander admired, cooperated with and supported Luthuli longer than anyone else (save John Reuling who associated himself with Luthuli from 1927 until at least the mid-1960's). Helander served as a missionary in South Africa from 1938 until 1956. During his time in South Africa, Helander denounced the Apartheid system in word and deed. In 1956, Helander returned to Sweden on furlough and wrote against Apartheid in both the Swedish and South African press. In 1957, this provocation led the South African government to deny Helander a visa to re-enter South Africa. From 1949 until 1959, Helander published on average one anti-Apartheid novel per year, the first being *Zulu Meets the White Man*.⁹⁴ Subsequent to his return Sweden, Helander introduced the human rights crisis in South Africa to the Swedish public resulting in the South African government's concern. Helander positively reflected the history, strategy and goals of the ANC and lobbied students, unions and government for its support. Through Helander's leadership on the Fund for the Victims of Racial Oppression, Sweden contributed the largest amount of funds to the International Defence and Aid Fund to which Luthuli expressed much gratitude.⁹⁵ As will be elaborated upon in chapter

⁹² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, xxvi.

⁹³ *Star*, "Nobel Prize: More Support for Luthuli", 02 November 1960.

⁹⁴ Gunner Helander, *Zulu Möter Vit Man* (Stockholm: Sv. Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1949).

⁹⁵ Joseph, *If This Be Treason*, 7-9.

Luthuli wrote the foreword to Joseph's book. Chapter five quotes an excerpt.

African National Congress, "Message to the Reverend Canon L. John Collins, Christian Action, London, 1964" from Luthuli. Found at:

ANC, www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/lutuli/msglondon1964.html, accessed on 25 June 2008.

five, Helander initiated the motivation for Luthuli to be the Nobel Peace Prize winner, accompanied him to Norway and probed him on his willingness to seek asylum there after accepting the Prize.

As one of his first acts following his return to Groutville, Luthuli wrote much correspondence inviting various prominent African leaders to the Interdenominational African Ministers' Conference to be held 16-17 December 1960 in Orlando. With the State of Emergency lifted, this conference of the remaining un-banned African activists gathered to assess the way forward. Luthuli could not attend the Conference due to his banning despite being a convener. Before the police raided the Conference and confiscated all its documents, the Conference expressed a need for unity among the liberation movements and the need for "effective use of non-violent pressures against apartheid".⁹⁶ The gathering resolved to sponsor an All-In African Conference scheduled for March 1961 in Pietermaritzburg. The Interdenominational African Ministers' Conference and the All-In African Conference proved to be the dying last 'kicks' of the liberation movement's official non-violent policy. At this time, Luthuli feared the non-violent movement would expire. In a 13 December 1960 correspondence to Q. Whyte of the South African Institute of Race Relations and three hundred other prominent Whites throughout South Africa, advocating that pressure be brought on the government to legalise the ANC, Luthuli warned:

The great danger is to allow a political vacuum to continue. When a legitimate national organisation is banned, anything may take its place. Uncontrolled and undisciplined movements may be formed and terrorism may arise.⁹⁷

Callinicos named the same circumscribed collective (Sisulu, Nokwe and Mandela) who provided crisis leadership and directed the ANC during the 1960 State of

⁹⁶ Resolutions, Adopted by the Consultative Conference of the African Leaders, and Cables, Sent by the Conference to the United Nations and to Oliver Tambo, 16-17 December 1960. Found in: Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge* 3, 626.

⁹⁷ UW, WCL, SAIRR, AD 2182, Section F, item 8, correspondence from Luthuli to Q. Whyte, 13 December 1960.

UKZN, APC&SA, PC2/3/7/1, correspondence to Peter Brown from Luthuli, 13 December 1960. Also found at LM.

Rand Daily Mail, "Luthuli Says: 'End Ban on A. N. C. and P. A. C.'", by Benjamin Pogrand, 09 December 1960.

Emergency to be among those who following the May 1961 strike evaluated that the “movement’s traditional weapons of protest...were no longer appropriate” and who “for many nights...discussed and carefully assessed the extent to which conditions for armed struggle were favourable”.⁹⁸ Elaine Reinertsen summarised the state of the ANC and the events that led to a quiet ‘coup’ against Luthuli as follows:

It is more than likely that the ANC, devastated by police repression, the Treason Trial and the State of Emergency, exhausted by extensive mass campaigning in the 1950s, and taken off guard by its banning in 1960, was on the point of collapse. The ‘Old Guard’ could put up little resistance when the initiative was seized by the militant wing of the National Executive. The Continuation Committee was dominated by Youth leaguers and communists; with Luthuli at Groutville, the way was open for the implementation of a new revolutionary ideology.⁹⁹

Conclusion

The Sharpeville massacre was the beginning of the end of Luthuli’s influence within the ANC and the liberation movement. A number of wedges pushed Luthuli away from his lieutenants. First, on the morning of the Sharpeville massacre, the *Golden City Post* published Luthuli’s, to many, humiliating appeal to a white constituency wherein Luthuli confided: ‘Blacks cannot manage without the Whites in South Africa’. Second, the PAC perceived in the ANC and Luthuli a pandering to white “bosses”. The PAC accused the ANC of following the dictates of liberal politicians, clergy and press in the prosecution of the liberation struggle. The emotive accusation convinced Mandela, Nokwe, Sisulu and others to compete with the PAC’s militancy by increasing the ANC’s.

This chapter revealed that Luthuli’s white liberal and Christian allies ideologically insulated him, thus affirming his opposition to violence that risked a likely race war. While Luthuli was sequestered in a white suburban home, his private cell and the prison’s hospital ward, his lieutenants in much harsher conditions agreed to plan for the use of violence. Luthuli testified in court that he would oppose violence while at the same time those under him planned for it. Sharpeville did not radicalise Luthuli, for he received

⁹⁸ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 283.

⁹⁹ Reinertsen, “Umkhonto we Sizwe”, 23.

immense support and hospitality from many of those he praised in his autobiography: Taylor, Brink, Reeves, Parkington, de Villiers, Junod and Reynecke. In 1960, Luthuli worked with the Hoopers on his autobiographical manuscripts, had his fine paid by the Black Sash and recuperated at an Anglican retreat centre. Luthuli hailed Scott, Huddleston and Collins for their financial benevolence. Helander lobbied European legislators for Luthuli to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. No doubt due to her close association with Luthuli, Mary-Louise Hooper became an honorary ANC member, even representing it overseas.

Associations alone did not prejudice others' conceptualisation of Luthuli as their leader. Rather, this chapter concludes that following his sentence for burning his pass, Luthuli's reluctant decision not to issue a statement advocating that all strive to abolish passes "without flinching" diminished his reputation. Unofficially, Luthuli's political fate mirrored Xuma and Moroka's when the ANCYL relieved him of the burden of leadership on the basis that he was not as resolved as he was when he issued "The Road to Freedom" statement. Luthuli's failure to issue the 1960 statement indicated to others in the ANC that he was not prepared to advance further and rendered him obsolete. Benson stated, "With Luthuli's blessing, ...Mandela had been chosen to lead at this hazardous time".¹⁰⁰

This chapter qualifies the above prejudice by clarifying that perception rather than reality diminished Luthuli's reputation. Luthuli's correspondence with Mary-Louise Hooper regarding the retaining of Communist attorneys conveys that Luthuli's close relationships with white liberal Christians were not indicative of his subservience to them. Rather, their similar, though not identical, theological and philosophical foundations united them. Luthuli did not compromise his convictions to appease his and the ANC's benefactors. Nonetheless, in politics, perception is everything. Luthuli's close associations and perceived lack of resolve instigated a silent coup within the ANC whereby the ANCYL and the Communists decided the ANC's political future. As the following chapter informs, that future would be determined in the 1961 decisions to form and launch *MK*.

¹⁰⁰ Benson, *Nelson Mandela*, 97.

Chapter 5

The Tempo Quickens¹

...it should be borne in mind that even people involved in the same event remember the details differently, and amnesia is no friend of accuracy.

-- Ahmed Kathrada²

Introduction

This chapter continues where chapter four concluded and narrates the events of 1961 as they relate to Luthuli and the ANC's turn to violence. The May Strike convinced Mandela that the government made the turn to violence inevitable while the same month the Christopher Gell award convinced Luthuli that moderate white liberal leaders could still enable political sanity to prevail. This chapter examines Mandela's own evaluations of the May strike to conclude that he prematurely abandoned it. Therefore, this study disputes the ANC's utilisation of the May strike's 'failure' as a pretext to abandon non-violent methods.

Luthuli and Mandela's views clashed in July 1961. After much protestation on his part, Luthuli very reluctantly yielded to the Congresses' Joint Executive resolution to form an armed movement for which Mandela successfully advocated. This chapter explains that Luthuli did not support or agree to embark upon violence, but rather after two exhausting nights of argument only yielded to a consensus decision to form *MK*. Luthuli's request for further deliberation, his insistence that *MK* must be separate from the ANC and his appeal that non-violent political mass action continue to be emphasised affirm this conclusion. Furthermore, this chapter reinterprets that the cause of Mandela's disconcerting January 1962 conversation with Luthuli was *MK*'s unauthorised launch and

¹ The title of Luthuli's autobiographical postscript is "The Tempo Quickens" (215). Luthuli wrote the postscript following the 1960 Sharpeville shootings and State of Emergency and before the March 1961 "All-In Africa Conference". Former President Thabo Mbeki used the same title for the inaugural Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture on 20 March 2004 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

² Kathrada, *Memoirs*, 142.

Here, Kathrada referred specifically to discrepancies that appear in accounts of *MK*'s role in the struggle.

its Manifesto's declaration that traditional methods of resistance has expired and that a new road is being forged.³

Though Luthuli yielded to the decision to form *MK*, soon thereafter the context dramatically altered, and his position strengthened when the Nobel Committee announced in October that he had received the Nobel Peace Prize. In his mind, Luthuli's sentiments against violence now became far more persuasive. This chapter explains that, for Luthuli, the award removed the strategic cul-de-sac Mandela insisted existed; 'The Road to Freedom Via the Cross' re-opened. The October announcement and reception of the Nobel Peace Prize reinvigorated Luthuli's public opposition to the preparation for violence. This chapter and overall study refutes the ANC's assertion that Mandela convinced Luthuli of the need for violence or that Luthuli forgot he had been convinced. Despite the Congresses' decision and Luthuli's participation in it, from October, Luthuli strove through every public statement to forestall that which he feared: Mandela's activation of *MK*. On 16 December 1961 on the heels of Luthuli's return from Norway, Mandela unexpectedly launched *MK* without the ANC's approval thus ignoring Luthuli's repeated pleas to allow non-violent methods to be bolstered by publicity gained by the Nobel Peace Prize. This chapter challenges a homogenised ANC history that ignores the internal contestation regarding violence within the ANC amongst its two leaders before and after the July 1961 decision to form *MK* and concludes that by launching *MK*, Mandela usurped Luthuli.

All-In Africa Conference

Prospects for continued non-violent methods dimmed in 1961 following the United Nations General Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld's disappointing visit in January, Verwoerd's withdrawal of South Africa's application to join the Commonwealth on 15 March and the balkanisation of the liberation movement prior to the March 25-26 All-African Conference. During this time, the Treason Trial still loomed. On 23 March, Judge Frans Rumpff interrupted the defence's fourth week of its final argument led by

³ Though occurring very early in 1962, I intentionally include Mandela's visit to Luthuli at the end of the 1961 chronology as Luthuli's disconcerting comments were directly related to *MK*'s launch and hence the two events are imbricated.

Bram Fischer and adjourned. Because Mandela's ban expired on 25 March, he anticipated attending and speaking at the All-In-Africa Conference in Pietermaritzburg during the court recess. Before Mandela departed for Pietermaritzburg, the ANC National Working Committee (NWC) met secretly, presumably in Gauteng, to discuss strategy. Luthuli had long since returned to his house arrest in Groutville following his Treason Trial testimony and being found guilty and released for burning his pass. Luthuli could not have been present to discuss strategy while waiting for the Treason Trial verdict just as he was unlikely to have participated in the September 1960 ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) that agreed to send Mandela underground.

The All-In Africa Conference hosted 1,400 attendees from as many as 145 organisations, most of which, following the government's culling and the participants' own boycott of the Conference, represented peripheral forces in the liberation struggle.⁴ Nonetheless, the All-In Africa Conference proved to be the last mass movement gathering organised by a collection of prominent liberation struggle leaders for many decades. Tom Lodge appropriately entitled his chapter on this period, "The Making of a Messiah". With a surprise entrance, an inspiring physical presence, an impassioned main address and a stealthy departure, Mandela sensationalised the event. Those gathered perceived Mandela as the new dynamic and more militant leader of the liberation struggle. Jordan Ngubane complained that the leaders of the Conference deliberately sidelined Luthuli to Mandela's advantage.⁵ Though participants sang at least one song about the General-President, "Spread the Gospel of Luthuli", one media representative, Benjamin Pogrand, reported in *Contact* that Mandela was the "star of the show".⁶ Elaine Reinertsen rightly discerned that "Chief Luthuli remained President-General until his death, but real leadership had passed to Mandela by 1961".⁷ The Conference resolved to issue an ultimatum to the government, through a National Action Council led by Mandela, calling for a national convention of multi-racial representatives to determine a

⁴ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 357-8.

⁵ Lodge, *Mandela*, 84, see endnote 10, 237. Lodge cited:

Jordan Ngubane, *An African Explains Apartheid* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1963), 172.

⁶ Sampson, *Mandela*, 142.

Lodge, *Mandela*, 84, see endnote 8, 237. Lodge cited:

Contact (Cape Town), 06 April 1961.

⁷ Reinertsen, "Umkhonto we Sizwe", 23.

new democratic constitution. The Conference required the government's response by 31 May, the day South Africa became a republic. Not expecting the demand to be met, the Conference also resolved "to stage country wide demonstrations on the eve of the proclamation of the Republic".⁸

Following the Conference, Mandela left Pietermaritzburg to report to Luthuli in Groutville before travelling back to Pretoria to hear the Treason Trial ruling.⁹ On 29 March, Judge Franz Rumpff, representing a panel of three judges, announced a unanimous ruling: 'not guilty'. After more than four years in court, the authorities discharged the defendants. The ANC's consistent and passionate teaching and implementation of non-violent strategies determined the essential basis of the defence's innocence. Luthuli responded to the verdict as "a timely upholding of the rule of law in our country". Luthuli further quipped:

[The ruling] has given a lie (sic) to insistent and malicious propaganda that has presented us as Communists, insurgents and what not, intent on overthrowing the Government by violence when all we wanted was our inherent right to participate fully in governing the country.¹⁰

In his foreword to Helen Joseph's book on the Treason Trial entitled *If This Be Treason*, Luthuli highlighted several themes that are examined in more depth in chapters four and six.

The Trial has been an inestimable blessing because it forged together diverse men of goodwill of all races who rallied to the support of the Treason Trial Fund and to keep up the morale of the accused. What would have been the plight of the accused without our Bishop Reeves, Alan Paton, Dr. Hellman, Canon Collins, Alex Hepple, Christian Action, Archbishop de Blank and Archbishop Hurley and all the other loyal men and women [without] whose help and co-operation, chaos would have prevailed in our ranks? We shudder to think even of the prospect of how we would have fared if they had not come forward. In all humility I can say that if there is one thing which helped push our movement along non-racial lines, away from narrow, separative (sic) racialism, it is the Treason

⁸ "Resolutions of the All-In African Conference in Pietermaritzburg", 25-26 March 1961. Found in: Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 632.

⁹ Benson, *Nelson Mandela*, 81.

¹⁰ Publication unknown, "Treason Trial Verdict – 'Law Upheld'", 30 March 1961.

Trial, which showed the depth of the sincerity and devotion to a noble cause on the white side of the colour line....¹¹

Since Sharpeville and the State of Emergency, Mandela and Luthuli looked in divergent directions in response to the noose placed around domestic politics. Sympathetic to pan-Africanist sentiments, Mandela discerned that liberation would more likely spring from black nationalist forces represented by organisations such as the anti-White Pan African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) that PAC the greatly influenced.¹² Sympathetic to liberal sentiments, Luthuli adhered more to an exceptionalist doctrine that viewed like-minded Christian Whites to be essential in bringing about liberation.

These above views can be seen in Mandela and Luthuli's differing concepts of a '[South Africa] United Front' (UF) organisation. Mandela declared at the All-In Conference that future "'militant campaigns' would be aided by external pressures that would be generated by the South African (sic) United Front abroad".¹³ In exile, Tambo formed the UF in 1960 as a coalition of liberation movements that would cooperate internationally to politically and economically fight the Apartheid regime. The UF eventually included the PAC, the ANC, the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the South West African National Union (SWANU), a then up-and-coming movement in South West Africa.¹⁴ The UF collapsed due to the PAC's antagonistic presence soon after the 1961 All-In Africa Conference. In 1962, Luthuli re-conceptualised the UF as a multi-racial coalition

¹¹ Joseph, *If This Be Treason*, 8-9.

¹² SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 433.

This is *not* to say that Mandela agreed with those sentiments and thus was also anti-White.

¹³ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 358.

As a matter of policy at this time, Mandela's reference to "militant campaigns" did not include violence. "The South Africa United Front which [Tambo] established...was based of course on non-violence".

Interview with Joe Matthews. Found in:

SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 90, see footnote 138.

One ANC document confusingly refers to the "United Front" as the Xuma-Dadoo-Naicker Pact of the 1940s and the Joint Congresses of the 1950s.

ANC-Norway, *ANC 1912-1993* (Oslo: African National Congress, 1993), 12.

Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 266.

¹⁴ The South African Indian Congress represented by Yusuf Dadoo was the only non-Black organisation.

of individual leaders, many of whom were Christian, white and liberal – and most importantly – opposed to violence.¹⁵

In addition to viewing the support of the rest of the African continent as a significant component in the liberation struggle as did the PAC, Mandela became more critical of domestic, liberal and Christian calls for moderation and thus non-violence. Liberals and white newspaper editors often criticised the upcoming Stay-at-Home campaign that was to coincide with Republic Day and the expected failure of the government to initiate a national convention. In a March 1961 article entitled “The Struggle for a National Convention”, Mandela wrote:

In the past we have been astonished by the reaction of certain political parties and “philanthropic” associations which proclaimed themselves to be anti-apartheid but which, nevertheless, consistently opposed positive action taken by the oppressed people to defeat this same policy. Objectively, such an attitude can only serve to defend white domination and to strengthen the National Party. It also serves to weaken the impact of liberal views amongst European democrats and lays them open to the charge of being hypocritical.¹⁶

An increasingly exasperated tone continued in a correspondence by Mandela to the leader of the United Party on 23 May urging the party to declare its stance on a national convention. Mandela bluntly conveyed the choice: “Talk it out, or shoot it out”.¹⁷

¹⁵ Luthuli indicated who he would like to include in the United Front: Ex-Chief Justices, Hon. Mr. Albert van der Sandt Centlivres and the Hon. Mr. Henry Fagan, Sir David Pieter de Villiers Graaff (the same to whom Mandela wrote, “Talk it out, or shoot it out”), Dr. Jan Steytler, Dr. Alan Paton of the Liberal Party, Rev. Z. R. Mahabane of the Interdenominational African Ministers’ Federation (IDAMF), Dr. G. M. Naicker, President of the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), Mr. P. R. Pather, President of the South African Indian Organisation (SAIO), Paramount Chief of *Abatembu*, Sabata Dalindyebo (the same who Luthuli criticised in September 1959), Dr. R. E. van der Ross of the Coloured Convention Movement, Archbishop Dennis Hurley, Archbishop Joost de Blank, Mr. Basson, Mr. Leon Levy, President of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), Mr. L. C. Scheepers, President of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Canon Alpheus Zulu, J. N. Singh, banned Vice-President of the SAIC. *New Age*, “‘Form United Front Now’: Interview, Cape Town, 24 May 1962. Found at: ANC, “Albert Luthuli – Various Items”, found at: www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/lutuli/lutuli8.html, 16-7, see footnote 13 on page 19, accessed on 04 April 2008.

¹⁶ Mandela, “The Struggle for a National Convention”, March 1961.

Excerpt from an unidentified article. Found in:

Sheridan Johns and R. Hunt Davis, Jr., eds. *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress: The Struggle against Apartheid, 1948-1990, A Documentary Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1991), 96.

¹⁷ Correspondence to Sir de Villiers Graaff from Nelson Mandela, calling on the United Party to support a national convention, 23 May 1961. Found in:

Christopher Gell Memorial Award

Even before Luthuli's Nobel Peace Prize was announced, he received humanitarian awards for his prophetic non-violent stance against injustice. In May 1961, the committee of the inaugural 1961 Christopher Gell Memorial Award for the Outstanding Contribution to Social Justice in South Africa in 1960 announced that Luthuli earned the honour. Gell was a disabled British journalist who advocated for democracy, irrespective of race colour or creed.¹⁸ The Gell announcement prior to, as well as the Nobel announcement shortly after, the fateful July Joint Congresses meeting at which the decision to form MK took place weighed on Luthuli's conscious when being lobbied to contradict all he for so long preached and what so many others praised him for preaching: non-violence.

The composition of the Gell Memorial Award committee affirms chapter four's thesis that Luthuli endeared himself to domestic and international liberal Whites sympathetic with the liberation movement's goals. Members of the committee unsurprisingly consisted of sympathetic white liberals: Gell's widow, Bishop Trevor Huddleston, the Archbishop of Cape Town Joost de Blank, Anthony Sampson, Rabbi Andre Ungar, Patrick Duncan and Prof. Leo Kuper.¹⁹ Luthuli applied to the Commissioner of Police for permission to attend. By 16 May, the Minister of Justice, F. C. Erasmus, denied the request.²⁰ Due to Luthuli's inability to travel to Port Elizabeth, the Gell committee postponed the scheduled 31 May ceremony. On 22 October, a day before the Nobel committee announced his Peace Prize, Luthuli received *in absentia* the Christopher Gell award during a belated ceremony. *Forum* printed a copy of Luthuli's acceptance speech, delivered by Yengwa on his behalf. In his acceptance of the award, Luthuli reminded his audience:

Johns and Davis, *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress*, 100.

Benson, *Nelson Mandela*, 84-8.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 635.

¹⁸ For years Gell struggled on an iron-lung and died on 31 May 1958.

¹⁹ Publication unknown, "Luthuli Wants to Go to P. E.: Ex-Chief's Republic Day Appeal to Police", 07 May 1961.

²⁰ Publication unknown, "Luthuli Cannot Go to P. E.", 16 May 1961.

The government has shown in recent years and months – during the State of Emergency last year and the Twilight Emergency during May this year, and through ministerial pronouncements – that it is arming itself to the teeth against an unarmed people who throughout their struggle have indicated by word and action their desire for a peaceful accommodation of their aspirations by those presently in power.²¹

Surprisingly, Luthuli stated that neither Sharpeville nor the May Strike engendered cause for disillusionment. Rather Luthuli identified such a demonstration of physical strength through the threat of violence as reason to “be encouraged, for it is a product of fear and not courage”.²²

May Strike

Similar to the All-In Convention, a determination of whether the 28-31 May strike (euphemistically referred to as a ‘Stay-at-Home’) succeeded depends on one’s perspective. Also like the All-In Convention, given the degree of internal division (between the PAC and the ANC), the profound lengths the state took to counter any form of non-violent protest and the greatly inhibited capacity of the ANC to mobilise, organise and advertise the Stay-at-Home, it is a wonder any success could be claimed. What is clear is that Mandela was in charge of the protest action from Johannesburg. This study need not analyse the events of the Stay-at-Home as other sources do so more adequately.²³ Suffice to say, the government implemented unprecedented measures, collectively amounting to a preparation for war, to stifle the Stay-at-Home. The government prepared itself to use the threat of overwhelming force to quell the protest.

What the government and the liberation forces failed to consider at the time was that another Sharpeville might very well have been the beginning of the end for the

²¹ LM, Yengwa, MYP, “Speech of a Nobel Prize-Winner: The Gell Memorial Address by A. J. Luthuli”, *Forum*, November 1961, 7.

UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA, 78/46-47 (CAMP MF 2914), Reel # 1, “Address on the Occasion of Christopher Gell Memorial Award to A. J. Luthuli”, 21 October 1961, 1-3.
Daily News, “Presentation of Award to Mr. Luthuli”, 08 May 1961.

²² LM, Yengwa, MYP, “Speech of a Nobel Prize-Winner”, *Forum*, November 1961, 7.

²³ SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 77-80.

Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 319-20.

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 361-4.

government. Another Sharpeville would cause the world to clearly understand that the forces of democracy possessed the moral high ground – or, the *only* moral ground. International solidarity with the oppressed majority would have moved quickly from denunciatory declarations to concrete measures to ostracise South Africa. An additional dramatic public relations disaster involving violence against unarmed demonstrators would have in the short to medium-term likely pushed the South African government to the brink of collapse in the wake of economic disinvestment, negative public relations with international bodies, trade boycotts, sanctions, and sports, academic and cultural exclusions. After Sharpeville, the United States, the Commonwealth, the United Nations (95 to 1) and numerous other countries in Asia and Africa clearly denounced the white supremacist government – all before the Nobel committee announced Luthuli's Nobel Peace Prize. As long as the ANC remained non-violent, South Africa would rapidly become an international pariah. Another demonstration of the government's use of brutal force in the face of non-violent protest had the capability to tip the balance of power towards the democratic movement as it did just briefly after Sharpeville when the government suspended the pass laws.

On the second day of the Stay-at-Home, Mandela, "demoralised" and "angry" by SABC reports that all was normal, inexplicably and incredibly called off the campaign.²⁴ Mandela then told a *Rand Daily Mail's* reporter, Benjamin Pogrund, that the days of non-violent struggle were over.²⁵ Mandela's rationale for impetuously calling off the strike is perplexing.²⁶ In his autobiography, Mandela remembered characterising to the press the people's adherence to the Stay-At-Home as "magnificent" and lauded them for "defying unprecedented intimidation by the state".²⁷ Even months after the event, Mandela appraised the Stay-at-Home to be a success. In an article entitled "Out of the Strike" excerpted from *Africa South-in-Exile*, Mandela reported proudly:

²⁴ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 319.

²⁵ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 319.

²⁶ Karis and Carter note that "Mandela wrote a detailed analysis of the stay-at-home that was issued in June 1961".

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 378. See footnote 230.

Ruth First, ed., *No Easy Walk to Freedom: Articles, Speeches and Trial Addresses of Nelson Mandela* (Heinemann: London, 1965), 94-106.

Johns and Davis, *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress*, 103-106.

²⁷ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 319.

Without a doubt, this campaign remained an impressive demonstration of the strength of our organisation, of the high level of political consciousness attained by our people, and of their readiness to struggle against the most intimidating odds... There were those who cried: "The strike has failed. It was against the Saracen Republic. It did not bring it down"... Only the most naïve and impatient can believe that a single campaign will create a wholly different South Africa... The May strike was one fighting episode. From it, the people emerged more confident, unshaken by prognosis that they failed, that strikes could "no longer work".²⁸

If Mandela assessed the Stay-at-Home in this manner long after the event, his calling-off of the campaign can be considered a tactical blunder. If Mandela determined that the people were "more confident" that strikes could work, then the justification to resort to violence based on an abandoned failed strike is questionable. The Associated Press reported that ninety percent of buses in Johannesburg were empty at 09:00, Monday, 29 May.²⁹ The *Post* reported:

Many thousands of workers registered their protest against the Republic and the government's refusal to cooperate with non-Whites. THEY DID NOT GO TO WORK. They disrupted much of South African commerce and industry. Some factories worked with skeleton staffs, others closed, and many other businesses were shut down for three days" (emphasis original).³⁰

The *New York Times* reported that half the city's labour force had stayed away from work.³¹ The police later admitted to sixty percent absenteeism in the Johannesburg area.³² *New Age* claimed in a leading article that it was the biggest national strike on a political issue ever staged in South African history".³³ The Stay-at-Home successfully

²⁸ *Africa South-in-Exile*, "Out of the Strike", by Nelson Mandela, October-December 1961. Found in: Johns and Davis, *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress*, 104.

²⁹ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 363.

³⁰ *Post*, 03 June 1961. Cited in:

Africa South-in-Exile, "Out of the Strike", by Nelson Mandela, October-December 1961.

³¹ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 362-3.

Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 319.

SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 79.

³² Benson, *Mandela*, 86.

³³ *New Age*, 08 June 1961. Cited by:

eclipsed the recognition and celebration of Republic Day. Yet, with no reported public violence and with some limited success, Mandela, disappointed and angry, halted the protest based on pessimistic media reports.³⁴ According to Govan Mbeki, those adhering to the protest in Sophiatown were incensed by the reversal and “descend[ed] on the Executive”.³⁵

Mandela prematurely called off the strike. Stay-at-homes and strikes required momentum to be built. ANC protest tradition from the 1949 Programme of Action to the 1952 Defiance Campaign to the 1960 Anti-Pass Campaign required carefully timed and incremental action, climaxing at a pre-planned crescendo. Only when public violence had erupted and/or when substantive momentum halted after a prolonged period, such as in the waning months of the Defiance Campaign, did ANC leaders extinguish earlier campaigns.

Events in the Eastern Cape lend credence to the notion that the May strike was growing momentum. The protest only began to take effect by the time Mandela called off the strike as Port Elizabeth experienced a seventy-five percent absentee rate. Mbeki recalled being dumbfounded, taking it for granted, not ‘seriously’ as did Mandela, that the press would issue reports to intentionally dampen the spirit of protest. In his post-strike analysis, Mandela coyly confessed his naïveté by relating, “Only after those first tense strike days had passed were more balanced assessments made of the extent of the strike” and “the people themselves learnt that they could not trust any verdict on their struggle but their own”.³⁶ The movement in the Eastern Cape defied the NEC and, for the first time, used petrol bombs to force buses to return to their depots preventing the transport of workers to their places of employment. Many months later, Mandela claimed in his post-strike analysis that:

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 364. See footnote 226, 378.

³⁴ Although, Mandela rightfully asserted that “During the strike in May last year the police went from house to house, beating-up Africans and driving them to work”.

Mandela, “Address to Conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa”, excerpted from an address in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, January 1962. Found in: Johns and Davis, *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress*, 109.

³⁵ Interview with Govan Mbeki. Found in:

SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 79-80.

³⁶ *Africa South-in-Exile*, “Out of the Strike”, by Nelson Mandela, October-December 1961.

Support for the strike grew stronger and stronger every day, and the demand for a national convention roared and crashed across the country.³⁷

Notwithstanding Mandela's anger and disillusionment at the time of the strike, there was a substantive (if not "magnificent") response to the protest; the protest gained momentum and the government committed no horrific incidents of violence. If the non-violent method that was the Stay-at-Home did not succeed, it was not sufficiently utilised or organised to enable its success. On the day Mandela called off the Stay-at-Home, he twice during press interviews issued a grave statement for which he would later be reprimanded by the NEC:

That morning in a safe flat in a white suburb, I met various members of the local and foreign press, and I once again called the stay at home 'a tremendous success'. But I did not mask the fact that I believed a new day was dawning. I said, "If the government reaction is to crush by naked force our non-violent struggle, we will have to reconsider our tactics. In my mind we are closing a chapter on this question of non-violent policy".³⁸

Mandela and ANC nationalist history narratives ubiquitously point to the failure of the May Strike to prove non-violent mass action's ineffectiveness and therefore justify the turn to violence.³⁹ However, the strike was prematurely called off despite its partial success and lack (not absence) of state sponsored violence. The strike's success or failure did not constitute the inefficacy of non-violent protest as Mandela and the ANC assert.⁴⁰ Luthuli made this point himself at the time. In her book, *Chief Albert Luthuli of*

³⁷ *Africa South-in-Exile*, "Out of the Strike", by Nelson Mandela, October-December 1961.

³⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 320.

Kathrada, *Memoirs*, 141.

SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 80.

SADET reported that Karis and Carter quote Mandela as follows: "As long as grievances remain, there will be protest actions of this kind or another. If peaceful protests like these are to be put down by the mobilisation of the army and the police, then people might be forced to use other methods of struggle".

See footnote 92 citing:

Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Freedom*, 3: 364. See footnote 230 citing: *New Age*, 01 June 1961.

Footage of this interview is shown to the public at the Nelson Mandela Museum in Umtata.

³⁹ It was this "use of police and army troops in May 1961 to defeat the planned national stay-away" that justified the turn to violence by the ANC in its statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

ANC, "Statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (Marshalltown: Department of Information and Publicity, August 1996), 46.

⁴⁰ Lodge, *Mandela*, 91.

Groutville, Benson wrote extensively on Luthuli's thoughts pertaining to non-violence. Written after Luthuli's reception of the Peace Prize and published in 1963, Benson's text conveyed Luthuli's sentiments on violence *after* the May 1961 Strike:

...there is no softness in the policy of non-violence; as he has said, it is militant, and he feels, despite government's crushing of non-violent demonstrations such as the three-day stay-at-home in May 1961 that "the non-violent method, even if unclothing it of any moral consideration – is the most effective and practical in our situation". He has pointed out that it has never been sufficiently well-organised to prove its efficacy.⁴¹

The calling off of the May Strike concluded an era of non-violent mass action and ushered in the beginning of a new violent one. In her study on the turn to violence, Elaine Reinertsen commented:

It is interesting to speculate how the decision to adopt violence circumvented Luthuli's liberalism; in all his public utterances after 1961, Luthuli seems to have remained ambivalent toward the existence of Umkhonto.⁴²

Even if 'circumvented' and 'ambivalent' are not the most accurate terms, the remainder of this chapter explores that which Reinertsen found interesting to speculate.

Umkhonto we Sizwe's Formation

Chapter three identifies Mandela as the source for the majority of post-1995 biographies and autobiographies that testify to the formation of *MK* and Luthuli's role in it.⁴³ Because most pre-1995 commentators (Benson, Karis and Carter, Bunting,

⁴¹ Benson, *Chief Albert Lutuli of South Africa*, 65.

Benson is an informed source as she served as Luthuli's secretary for much of time between the announcement and reception of the Nobel Peace Prize. In fact, Benson's un-cited quotations of Luthuli likely derived from her time as his secretary.

⁴² Reinertsen, "Umkhonto we Sizwe", 13.

⁴³ Mandela stated in his 1964 Rivonia Trial statement that *MK* formed in November 1961. Throughout this study, I refer to the July Joint Congresses' *decision* to allow for *MK*'s formation as the event during which *MK* formed.

Barry Feinberg and Andre Odendaal, eds., *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle Is My Life (His Speeches & Writings 1944-1990)*, rev. ed. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1994), 167.

Buthelezi and Slovo) conveyed that Luthuli was uninvolved and unaware of the decision to form a new organisation that would utilise violence, Mandela's testimony in *Long Walk to Freedom* and all subsequent copies of his account require closer examination.

Other evidence confirms the accuracy of Mandela's autobiography insofar as it stated Luthuli's presence and involvement in the decision to form *MK*. In draft manuscripts of Masabalala "Bonnie" Yengwa's unpublished autobiography, Yengwa affirmed that Luthuli presided over the momentous meetings in July 1961. Yengwa's testimony is important not simply because of his intimacy with Luthuli, but more so, for the purposes of this investigation, because his draft memoirs were written before his 1987 death and thus *before* the publication of Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*. Yengwa related:

Chief Luthuli was still under a banning order and as a result a full [National Executive] Committee was called at Chief Luthuli's magisterial district in secret so that he could attend. This was after everyone in the [Treason Trial] had been discharged. There was a very long heart searching debate, because the ANC's policy of non-violence had been tried since 1952 and after years of action through strikes and other methods they had only met with violence. Some of us were still sceptical about the use of violence, including Chief Luthuli, on the grounds that the people had still to be consulted and we would not be seen to be democratic in changing without consultation from one policy to another. But we had to accept the logic.⁴⁴

Luthuli was aware of and did participate in the decision to form *MK* as Mandela attested in his autobiography.

Yet, rather than support the decision, Luthuli yielded, albeit very reluctantly and after two exhausting all-night meetings, to form *MK*. Herein contested is Mandela's assertion that Luthuli's anger at being uniformed resulted from a mentally feeble mind that could remember the July NEC and the Congresses' Joint Executive (CJE) meetings and his involvement in them.⁴⁵ Instead, Mandela inaccurately recalled precisely *what*

⁴⁴ LM, MYP, unpublished draft autobiographical manuscript, 106.

⁴⁵ The Joint Congresses included the ANC, Indian Congress, South African Congress of Trade Unions, Coloured People's Congress and Congress of Democrats. Meer, *A Fortunate Man*, 224.

upset Luthuli during their “disconcerting conversation” following the December 1961 bombings.

In his autobiography, Mandela disclosed that he discussed the armed struggle with Sisulu as far back as 1952, unknown to Luthuli (according to his Treason Trial testimony). By June 1961, Mandela became convinced of the need to use violence. On 26 June, “Freedom Day”, Mandela issued from underground a statement that cagily predicted violence through the use of ‘alternative’ struggle methods.⁴⁶ Following the ‘failure’ of the May Strike, Sisulu and Mandela again discussed the armed struggle and resolved to raise the issue at a June 1961 NWC meeting.⁴⁷ At the meeting, Kotane argued vociferously against the proposal brought by Mandela. Kotane accused Mandela of not having carefully thought out the proposal. Kotane argued:

There is still room for the old methods if we are imaginative and determined enough. If we embark on a course Mandela is suggesting, we will be exposing innocent people to massacres by the enemy.⁴⁸

Possibly referring to the May Strike, Kotane stingingly stated Mandela “had been outmanoeuvred and paralysed by the government’s actions, and now in desperation...was resorting to revolutionary language”.⁴⁹ Mandela’s autobiography reflected his sense of humour and humility when he told how he chided Sisulu for not coming to his rescue. Sisulu realised Kotane was too formidable and decided to silently retreat, believing that a personal meeting with Mandela and Kotane would be far more effective.⁵⁰ It was. Later, in a private all day meeting, Mandela told Kotane bluntly:

⁴⁶ “Issued...on 26 June 1961 from inside South Africa, explaining his decision, in accordance with advice from the National Action Council, to carry on his political work underground”. The ANC in London published the statement.

Feinberg and Odendaal, *Nelson Mandela*, 119-21.

⁴⁷ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 320.

Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 146.

Sampson, *Mandela*, 150.

⁴⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 320.

Sampson, *Mandela*, 150.

SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 88. SADET cited Mandela.

Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 146.

Meer, *A Fortunate Man*, 224

⁴⁹ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 320.

⁵⁰ Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 146. Mandela cited.

Sampson, *Mandela*, 150.

[Your] mind is stuck in the old mould of the ANC's being a legal organisation. People were already forming military units on their own, and the only organisation that had the muscle to lead them was the ANC. We have always maintained that the people were ahead of us, and now they were.⁵¹

Mandela persuaded Kotane. Kotane subtly hinted to Mandela that he would not contest the proposal if made again at the next NWC meeting to be held in a week's time.⁵² On the second attempt, Mandela persuaded the NWC to agree that the proposal be brought to the NEC that would meet in Durban in July 1961.⁵³

While contemplating the adoption of violence, Mandela worried that the ANC had just emerged from a four year trial wherein its consistent and clear non-violent policy thwarted the prosecution's efforts to have the Trialists found guilty of High Treason. Contrary to ANC history that espouses that its non-violence policy was merely 'strategic', Mandela confessed that the ANC contended in the Treason Trial that it was an "inviolable principle".⁵⁴ Mandela, not the ANC, believed "that non-violence was a tactic that should be abandoned when it no longer worked".⁵⁵ He had good reason to be concerned about the upcoming NEC meeting. Mandela was apprehensive about his proposal because he expected Luthuli's "moral commitment to non-violence" would cause difficulties.⁵⁶ When Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein presented a report advocating armed

⁵¹ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 321.

Meer, *A Fortunate Man*, 224.

⁵² SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 88. SADET cited Mandela.

⁵³ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 321.

Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 146. Sisulu cited Mandela.

SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 88.

Lodge, *Mandela*, 90.

Ismail Meer incorrectly guessed that the NEC met secretly on a Groutville farm in "August/September".

Meer, *A Fortunate Man*, 223.

Some sources indicate "Stanger" (Sampson) and others "Durban" (Mandela and Sisulu). I understand the localities to be synonymous. Lodge (90) and SADET (1: 88) are accurate when they stated the meetings occurred in Stanger at the house of an Indian sugar plantation owner.

Callinicos incorrectly dated the meeting in October.

Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 283.

⁵⁴ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 322.

⁵⁵ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 322.

⁵⁶ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 321.

force at a 1961 Communist Party conference, Turok recalled Mandela shared “that it would be difficult to sell this to the ANC, particularly Luthuli”.⁵⁷

Luthuli consistently and unqualifiedly opposed any move towards violence, before, during and after the decision to form *MK*. Recorded in 2002 in a Sacramento, California hospital, Narainsamy Naicker remembered his associations with Luthuli.⁵⁸ Naicker highlighted a discussion he had with Luthuli regarding his suspicions of a turn to violence.

He entertained us for a while and then he told us, “Why don’t we get into the car and go away from here”. He drove around into the bamboos behind his residence. He said, “Since it was getting a little dark and late, there’s no likelihood of the Security Branch (the Apartheid Political Police) getting in here – at least we would know before hand, if they do”. When we got there he had a flashlight that he turned on and we were able to converse. All he wanted to know was, whether we had any knowledge that there were any steps being taken to move from one aspect of the movement into violence. I said as far as we are concerned we are non-violent and there’s no way we will become violent and if the ANC (African National Congress) is with us it should be happy. Chief was happy with that it and it seems to cut some measure with his association with organisations that are non-violent. So he was non-violent to the utmost.⁵⁹

The date of this poignant meeting Naicker had with Luthuli is not indicated. The context reveals that it took place shortly before the July 1961 NEC meeting.

Mandela’s comments to NEC meeting revealed his adamant stance for the turn to violence. Seeking the moral high ground, Mandela couched its argument in ethical terms.

⁵⁷ UWC, RIMA, MCH 07, 8.4.5, tape 2, interview with Ben Turok, August - October 1973, 5. Mandela, who was not a Communist, must have been at the Communist Party conference as an observer or as an ANC representative. However, Simpson’s dissertation on the turn to violence suggested that Mandela held membership in the Communist Party. Simpson acknowledged that the matter is one of contestation. Simpson, “‘Total Onslaught’ Reconsidered”, 48. See endnote 11, 82. Simpson cited, among other sources: Sampson, *Mandela*, 147

⁵⁸ Otherwise known as “Narainsamy T. Naicker”. Naicker co-founded and served as President of the Committee for South African Solidarity (COSAS). Naicker died on 19 January 2003.

⁵⁹ “Naicker Remembers Chief Luthuli”, *South African Beacon* 10, no. 2, Summer 2003, 20.

...the state had given us no alternative to violence...It was wrong and immoral to subject our people to armed attacks by the state without offering them some kind of alternative.⁶⁰

Mandela's arguments were persuasive because many in the movement "felt rudderless".⁶¹ Mandela argued that sporadic violence had already begun, or was at least imminent, by the African Resistance Movement (ARM), the PAC's *Pogo* and in rural uprisings such as those in Mpondoland and Thembuland. Mandela debated that the moral and strategic decision would be to control and direct the violence that had become inevitable.⁶² Cleverly, Mandela argued that violent methods could be implemented according to 'principles', just as non-violent methods had been. For example, the violence waged could be against symbols of the state, of oppression, rather than against human beings.⁶³ Mandela conceded in his autobiography that Luthuli "resisted" his arguments.⁶⁴

For Luthuli, the use of non-violence was not only premised on strategic grounds. Ethical, theological and relational considerations also heavily predisposed Luthuli to oppose the use of violence. Also, Luthuli argued that the ANC received its mandate from the grassroots; the ANC could not make such a massive policy alteration (strict non-violence to an armed movement) without the consultation and re-training, ideologically speaking, of the membership. After "working on him all night", the physical vigour and the rhetorical tenacity of the young lions fatigued the older Luthuli.

Mandela perceived that Luthuli acceded to the arguments that a military campaign was inevitable. However, Luthuli only agreed that the matter move to a more representative body where he would have more allies. Though the NEC formally endorsed the NWC's decision to form an armed movement, Luthuli suggested that the meeting resolve to have never discussed the matter.⁶⁵ This would allow those in the ANC

⁶⁰ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 322.

Kotane's biography cited Mandela's same expressed sentiments.

Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 264, footnote 346.

⁶¹ LM, MYP, unpublished draft autobiographical manuscript, 106.

⁶² SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 88. SADET cited Mandela.

⁶³ Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 146.

⁶⁴ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 322.

⁶⁵ Meer conveyed that the ANC National Executive agreed to: "allow the formation of an organisation that would engage in violent forms of struggle". The ANC National Executive did not agree to the 'initiation' of violence or the 'launch' of an armed movement.

Meer, *A Fortunate Man*, 224.

with non-violent inclinations to argue in solidarity (and thus strength) with like-minded leaders at the Congresses' Joint Executives (CJE) meeting to be held the following night. Luthuli clearly did not agree with the decision but his Congregational ethos predisposed him against imposing his will as the Chair. Curnick Ndlovu testified:

Luthuli believed unquestionably in non-violent struggle. [But] when these discussions took place he was not a leader who believed in dictating.⁶⁶

Mandela's autobiography asserted that Luthuli proposed an ambiguous compromise in the NEC meeting. After what must have been for Luthuli a thoroughly exhausting night, he recommended:

...a military movement should be a separate and independent organ, linked to the ANC and under the overall control of the ANC, but fundamentally autonomous.⁶⁷

'Independent', yet 'linked'; 'autonomous' yet 'under the overall control'. These contradictory characteristics of what would become *MK* made little collective sense.⁶⁸ The above contradiction carried into the CJE's meeting held the following evening.

A further indication of Luthuli's objection to the decision to form a military movement was his warning not to neglect "the essential tasks of organisation and the

Mandela stated that Luthuli requested that the meeting "treat the new resolution as if the ANC had not discussed it" so that the legality of the other Congresses were not jeopardised. Yet, at a *secret* meeting the *banned* ANC resolved to prepare for *illegal* violence. A decision taken by the ANC would not jeopardise the other Congresses. In addition, not documenting or not announcing the resolution would protect other groups should they have needed protection. To consider the matter 'not discussed' is much different than not having the matter documented or announced. Therefore, as Meer suggested (224), I assert Luthuli requested that the matter to be considered not to have been discussed so that he could (re-)open the debate as if it had never happened and invite those in the ANC who were opposed to violence to ally with other members of the Congresses who also opposed violence. Luthuli proved to be a very clever Chair.

Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 322.

⁶⁶ Interview with Curnick Ndlovu. Found in: SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 1: 89, see footnote 130.

⁶⁷ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 322.

Sisulu cited the same illogical "compromise".

Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 146.

⁶⁸ Today, the same dynamic exists between the ANC and its youth and women's leagues. Recently, the boundaries of the ANC's authority, or lack thereof, have been tested by the Youth League's President, Julius Malema.

traditional methods of struggle”, as they were primary.⁶⁹ There is little, if any, evidence that Mandela heeded this warning. Mandela spent the rest of 1961 forming an army and testing its munitions. Little time could be spent on political organisation, for Mandela had only six months to prepare his army before launching it at the close of the year.

To open the CJE meeting, Luthuli displayed his penchant for requesting a ‘careful reconsideration’ of an item when he had objections or concerns. As Luthuli did with the ANC ratification of the Freedom Charter, so he did with the NEC’s resolution to form a military organisation. Luthuli indicated the previous night that the NEC’s approval of the formation of an armed movement would be treated as if it had not been discussed. Therefore, Mandela, who interpreted the meeting’s opening as “inauspicious”, should not have been surprised when Luthuli as Chair presiding over the meeting asked that the matter be discussed “afresh”.⁷⁰

Mandela argued against Kotane in the first NWC meeting and against Luthuli in the NEC meeting. The Indians of Natal, political disciples of Gandhi’s ‘Satyagraha’ (non-violent ‘Truth Force’), proved most difficult to convince at the CJE’s meeting held at the Bodasingsh’s beach house near Stanger.⁷¹ From 20:00, the contestation raged all night. Yusuf Cachalia, J. N. Singh (Vice-President of the SAIC), and ‘Monty’ Naicker (President of the SAIC) proved to be the worthy adversaries Mandela expected.⁷² Singh countered Mandela charging that, “Non-violence has not failed us. We have failed non-violence”.⁷³ In light of the disunity evident in the democratic movement prior to the All-In African Conference and Mandela’s inexplicable and rash calling-off of the May strike, Singh argued a valid point. Mandela retorted that non-violence had failed, for it had “done nothing to change the heart of the oppressors”.⁷⁴ Luthuli again voiced his

⁶⁹ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 322.

⁷⁰ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 323.

Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 146. Mandela cited.

“Despite [NEC’s] decision, [Luthuli] requested the members of the NEC feel free to participate and express their own individual views in the debate”.

Meer, *A Fortunate Man*, 224.

⁷¹ Meer, *A Fortunate Man*, 224.

⁷² Sampson, *Mandela*, 151. Sampson cited Mandela.

⁷³ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 323.

Meer, *A Fortunate Man*, 224.

Sampson, *Mandela*, 151. Sampson cited Mandela.

⁷⁴ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 323.

misgivings.⁷⁵ Luthuli optimistically dreamed that if the hearts of the international community, white liberal democrats and faithful Christians could be changed to struggle non-violently together with the unified mass action sponsored by black, coloured and Indian political movements, then the oppressors would be forced to capitulate. Luthuli reasoned that non-violent methods would foment far more political and economic pressure on a heavily armed, sophisticated and brutal regime than would an untrained, unequipped and isolated army.

As with the previous night's discussions, complete exhaustion rather than careful reasoned consensus allowed a resolution to be accepted at dawn. The members of CJE agreed that Mandela and others would not be disciplined for forming a new military organisation separate from the ANC that would remain non-violent. Mandela stated in his autobiography that the military organisation "would not be subject to the direct control of the mother organisation".⁷⁶ The contradictions apparent in the NEC resolution were not clarified in the resolution taken by the CJE. No one made clear the distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' control. Mandela inferred that the distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' were 'operational' and 'political', respectively or 'tactical' (short-term) and 'strategic' (long-term), respectively. In his 1964 Rivonia Trial statement, Mandela testified that he would...

...at all times subject [MK] to the political guidance of the ANC and would not undertake any different form of activity from that contemplated without the consent of the ANC.⁷⁷

These ambiguities caused Mandela's confusion during his January 1962 "disconcerting" meeting with Luthuli following *MK*'s launch as it can be considered both political and operational, both tactical and strategic.

MK's ambiguous status also lead to what Slovo referred to as the "necessary fiction": that initially *MK* was not the armed wing of the ANC. Robert Resha would soon publicly dispel the myth that the ANC and *MK* were not synonymous. The ANC at Lobatse in October 1962 dispensed with Luthuli's "compromise". The NWC, NEC and

⁷⁵ Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 280. Sisulu cited Mandela.

⁷⁶ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 324.

⁷⁷ Feinberg and Odendaal, *Nelson Mandela*, 167.

CJE meeting allowed Mandela to get his proverbial 'foot in the door'. To placate Luthuli, the CJE resolved to keep the organisations separate. Mandela orchestrated the change he intended for the ANC. Despite acknowledging in his autobiography that the meeting agreed the ANC would remain non-violent, Mandela stated only four sentences later:

Henceforth, the ANC would be a different kind of organisation... embarking on a new and more dangerous path, a path of organised violence, the results of which we did not know and could not know.⁷⁸

Nobel Peace Prize Announced

The Norwegian Nobel Committee considered Luthuli for the Peace Prize at least from November 1960 when the public became aware of his candidacy.⁷⁹ Andrew McCracken of Bronxville, New York, editor of *Advance* magazine, a Congregational publication, nominated Luthuli for the Nobel Peace Prize.⁸⁰ The two men had met in 1948 when Luthuli had lectured in the United States. Credit for Luthuli's nomination for and awarding of the Peace Prize must ultimately be given to a Swedish Lutheran. Gunnar Helander, a former South African missionary and then vicar of the Karlskoga parish in Sweden, spoke on the radio, wrote speeches, submitted articles and strongly proposed Luthuli's candidacy to his parliament.⁸¹ Helander gave his reason for supporting Luthuli:

⁷⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 323-4.

⁷⁹ *Star*, "Nobel Prize: More Support for Luthuli", 02 November 1960.

Star quoted Rhona Churchill, who wrote for the *Rand Daily Mail*, reporting, "The award is certainly no sudden decision. The Nobel Prize Committee took fifteen months to investigate Luthuli".

Star, "Luthuli's Prize Brings Joy to Millions", 24 October 1961.

Ranjith Kally's book, written by Farook Khan, indicated that as early as 1957 the Nobel Committee "met and decided to defer their decision on giving Chief Luthuli the Prize". Furthermore, the text claimed, "In 1959, the Nobel Committee met and decided to defer their decision on giving Chief Luthuli the Prize". Both statements are incorrect. Kally's text proves generally unreliable and many dates are fictitious. For example, Kally's text cites 1956 as the year the Joint Congresses' made its compromise decision to form MK.

Ranjith Kally, *The Struggle: 60 Years in Focus* (Durban: no publisher cited, 2004), 1.

⁸⁰ *New York Times*, 11 December 1961 and 21 July 1967. Cited by:

Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 25. See footnote 57.

Whitman, *The Obituary Book*, 124.

⁸¹ *Sunday Times*, "Nobel Prize for Luthuli: 'Fair Chance'", 15 October 1961.

I admired Luthuli and his line had been 'violence under no circumstances'. That is why he could be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. That was the main thing.⁸²

Helander's advocacy resulted in convincing thirty-four Swedish members of parliament and Albert Schweitzer, himself a former Peace Prize winner, of Luthuli's worthiness and they subsequently recommended him.⁸³ In February 1961, Norwegian Socialist members of parliament supported the Swedish nomination.⁸⁴ Of course, many others also advocated that the honour be given to Luthuli. One source cited Arthur Blaxall as a prominent nominee.⁸⁵ Ronald Segal, editor of *Africa South in Exile*, proposed Luthuli as a candidate to the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY). The IUSY unanimously passed a resolution in support of Luthuli at a 1960 conference in Vienna.⁸⁶ No one person or organisation can claim sole responsibility for Luthuli's nomination. Rather, a well-spring of support from around the world advocated that the Nobel Peace Prize be bestowed upon Luthuli for his staunch non-violent stance against a very violent antagonist.

On 23 October 1961, one to two months after the fateful CJE's meeting and almost two months before the launch of *MK*, the Nobel committee formally announced the news that Luthuli received the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize.⁸⁷ The following day, one South African editorial acknowledged Luthuli's Nobel credentials:

Mr. Luthuli's long career of struggle has been marked by a constant faith in the common humanity of all peoples in this land. He has steadfastly refused to compromise while eschewing all violence in the pursuit of his

Interview with Gunner Helander, Västerås, 12 February 1996. Found in: Sellström, *Liberation in Southern Africa-Regional and Swedish Voices*, 285.

⁸² Interview with Gunner Helander, Västerås, 12 February 1996. Found in: Sellström, *Liberation in Southern Africa-Regional and Swedish Voices*, 286.

⁸³ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Luthuli Wins Nobel Prize: R 31,000 Grant for Opposing Violence", 24 October 1961. *Cape Argus*, "Nobel Honour Proposed Nine Months Ago", 24 October 1961.

⁸⁴ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 25.

⁸⁵ Kally, *The Struggle*, 1.

⁸⁶ Whitman, *The Obituary Book*, 127.

⁸⁷ *Cape Times*, "Luthuli Wins Nobel Prize: R 31,000 Grant for Opposing Violence", 24 October 1961.

Cape Times, "Luthuli Is Awarded Nobel Peace Prize: First South African to Win Peace Honour", 24 October 1961.

ideal of non-discrimination. He has suffered for his principles but seldom allowed words of bitterness to cross his lips or emotion to blur his vision.⁸⁸

Ebrahim Mahomed, Luthuli's very close friend, told him at 17:30 that he had won the Nobel Peace Prize.⁸⁹ One of the first to congratulate Luthuli was Blaxall, his old friend and colleague with whom he served in the Christian Council of South Africa and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Luthuli told Blaxall that he thought Mahomed was playing a trick on him as the day before he had received the Gell Memorial Award. Luthuli ribbed Mahomed for confusing the two awards.⁹⁰ Those who intimately knew Luthuli testify that after hearing that he won the Peace Prize, Luthuli sequestered himself in his home for several hours in deep thought, prayer and meditation. In one interview, Luthuli spoke of the added burden of responsibility the Peace Prize engendered: "God help me live up to it".⁹¹ During this time, Luthuli determined his strategy so that the reception of the award fostered the maximum possible coverage, and thus sympathy, for the struggle for liberation. Luthuli said in one interview that "an approach to personal and public problems...must be decisive, although they are constantly guided by Christian principles and doctrines".⁹² The Peace Prize presented a window of opportunity that required bold leadership. Luthuli had to speak to, argue for and declare use of non-violence consistently and resolutely.

Many suspected, both then and now, that the Nobel Committee awarded Luthuli the Peace Prize with the intention to reinforce his and the liberation movement's non-violent stance, thus pushing them farther away from the violent precipice all feared was on the horizon. For example, Ezekiel Mphahlele hypothesised that the Nobel Prize "may have been interpreted as implying that the Scandinavians were investing in non-violence in South Africa".⁹³ The July decision to form *MK* meant that "this would be expecting

⁸⁸ *Daily News*, "Mr. Luthuli's Honour", 24 October 1961.

⁸⁹ Jean Hill attested that the editor of *Ilanga*, Dhlomo, accompanied by Mahomed shared the news with Luthuli.

Interview with Jean Hill, Luthuli Museum, Groutville, Kwadukuza, 18 April 2005.

⁹⁰ *Star*, "How Luthuli Heard News of Nobel Peace Prize Award", letter to the editor by Rev. Arthur Blaxall, 13 November 1961.

⁹¹ *Daily News*, "Luthuli Wants to Go to Oslo for His Nobel Prize", 24 October 1961.

Cape Argus, "Luthuli Proud – But With a New Burden", 24 October 1961.

⁹² *Daily News*, "The Man of the Hour, But His Old-World Courtesy Remains", 26 October 1961.

⁹³ Ezekiel Mphahlele, "Albert Luthuli: The End of Non-Violence", *Africa Today* 14, August 1967, 1-3.

too much".⁹⁴ Mphahlele wrote that Luthuli felt "awkward" investing in "a prize for a religious-political creed his organisation now found irrelevant".⁹⁵ One commemorative narrative commented that with violence being seriously considered:

Peace loving people, needed to boost Chief Albert Luthuli for they feared that South Africa was on the brink of bloodshed. They were convinced that he had been able to stave off any mass conflict.⁹⁶

Another editorial opined "Let Him Go", arguing:

...he has been hailed as being a moderate devoted to peaceful methods of political progress. It is impossible now for Mr. Lutuli to be anything other than a moderate and a man of peace.⁹⁷

Luthuli recognised others' suspicion that the Nobel Committee's intention in awarding the Prize was specifically to reinforce a non-violent political tack. In one interview, Luthuli naïvely discounted them.

The award would defeat its purpose utterly if there was any suggestion of an ulterior motive. That would defeat its whole purpose with Albert Luthuli and with the whole of Africa. In the mind of the committee, I am sure – if one can speculate on these things – the award was given because I have always worked for peace. It is not trying to buy me for peace.⁹⁸

Yet, in addition to responsively lauding Luthuli's past position, the Nobel committee determinatively cemented his future position on violence. Luthuli prolifically advocated non-violent methods from the time of the announcement (October 1961) until his appeals became too embarrassing to the liberation movement that had long since changed policy (April 1962). Ultimately, the Nobel Committee failed to influence the liberation

As cited from Pillay's *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 30.

⁹⁴ *Africa Today*, "Albert Luthuli: The End of Non-Violence", 1-3.

⁹⁵ *Africa Today*, "Albert Luthuli: The End of Non-Violence", 1-3.

⁹⁶ Kally, *The Struggle*, 1.

⁹⁷ *Sunday Tribune*, "Let Him Go", 29 October 1961.

⁹⁸ *Sunday Tribune*, "Lutuli – The Impact of a Personality", by Michael Lloyd, 29 October 1961. The interview was conducted at Ebrahim Mahomed's home.

movement to remain non-violent while Luthuli's influence within the ANC weakened and Mandela's strengthened.

Mahomed was just one of a cast of characters who were personally close, affirming and of great assistance to Luthuli after he won the Peace Prize. While political bans on the ANC, Luthuli and his ANC colleagues made allied cooperation difficult, the intensity of friends and supporters of the liberal ilk can not go unnoticed. In the wake of the Nobel announcement, as during the Treason Trial, Luthuli's closest compatriots were not necessarily ANC members. Mahomed could arguably be considered Luthuli's closest friend. In his deposition to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Mahomed's son Yunus remembered Luthuli in their home "daily".⁹⁹ Mahomed joined the Liberal Party, founded a branch in Stanger and in time became its national Treasurer and Secretary.¹⁰⁰ Because Groutville was a rural tribal reserve and no other races could access Luthuli there, Yunus indicated that "most of all the secretarial work was done at my dad's office".¹⁰¹ If a meeting or work was required, Mahomed would "leave his office and his clients to go and do it, irrespective of the consequences".¹⁰² After Luthuli won the Peace Prize, Mahomed "turned over his [Stanger] office for the use of the Chief, abandoned his bookkeeping", and handled all the phone calls, telegrams and correspondences that arrived.¹⁰³ In addition to often serving as Luthuli's chauffeur, Mahomed was his bookkeeper.

Beginning the day the Peace Prize was announced, accolades swamped Luthuli.¹⁰⁴ The night of the announcement, Luthuli did not rest until three in the morning.¹⁰⁵ Phone calls inundated Luthuli as early as six the next morning.¹⁰⁶ Over one hundred telegrams arrived. In Luthuli's diary, interviews were booked solid until the end of the week.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁹ LM, EVMP, deposition from Yunus Mahomed, 20 May 1997, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Jean Hill, unpublished "Autobiography of Jean Hill", 41.

UKZN, APC&SA, PC2/9/29/1, correspondence from E. V. Mahomed to C. R. Swart, 25 June 1959.

¹⁰¹ LM, EVMP, deposition by Yunus Mohamed, 2.

¹⁰² LM, EVMP, deposition by Yunus Mohamed, 2.

¹⁰³ Interview with Jean Hill, Luthuli Museum, Groutville, Kwadukuza, 18 April 2005.

¹⁰⁴ UW, WCL, COD, AD 2187, H 46, Press Statement from the Congress of Democrats by the National Secretary, Ben Turok, 24 October 1961.

UW, WCL, COD, AD 2187, H 45, handwritten draft of expression of congratulations to Luthuli, 24 October 1961.

¹⁰⁵ *Daily News*, "Luthuli Wants to Go to Oslo for His Nobel Prize", 24 October 1961.

¹⁰⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, "1960 Man of Peace Has World on Doorstep", 25 October 1961.

¹⁰⁷ *Daily News*, "The World Is on Luthuli's Doorstep", 15 October 1961.

With Mahomed, Mary Benson served as Luthuli's secretary after the announcement of the Peace Prize. Benson handled the great bulk of correspondences from all over the world that flooded into Stanger. Not long after the announcement, Benson left to travel overseas.¹⁰⁸ Due to Benson's departure, Mahomed requested Jean Hill to fulfil the responsibilities as Luthuli's secretary. Jean and her husband, Charles, were members of the Musgrave Congregational Church in Durban. Jean, as a white liberal Christian, was quite typical of Luthuli's non-ANC supporters. Long before Luthuli won the Prize, Jean served on the Durban Joint Council of Europeans and Africans, a predecessor of the South African Institute of Race Relations, and was a member of the multi-racial International Club that sponsored an event at which Jean first met Luthuli. Jean also served the Women's Defence of the Constitution, the predecessor of the Black Sash. After unsuccessfully trying to begin a chapter of the Civil Rights League in Durban, Jean, Charles and others founded the Liberal Party. In 1959, Charles proposed a unanimously approved resolution from the Liberal Party objecting to Luthuli's banning.¹⁰⁹ Much later, Jean's involvement with the Defence and Aid Fund provided legal defence and subsistence income to families of political prisoners earning her the government's ire. The government banned Jean from 1965 to 1970.

For a week to ten days before Luthuli set off for Norway, Jean travelled daily the seventy-five kilometres to Stanger from Durban. In her unpublished autobiography, Jean wrote:

I used to drive to Stanger everyday, type out the replies Chief dictated to me and have lunch with E. V. and Chief at E. V.'s home.¹¹⁰

Alan Paton became Jean's Chairperson as she served as the Secretary of the Defence and Aid Fund in Durban. Later, as leader of the Liberal Party, Paton's fawning over Luthuli made African nationalists bristle with discomfort.¹¹¹ After hearing of Luthuli's award,

¹⁰⁸ Benson later wrote the second, after Callan, biographical work about Luthuli entitled *Chief Albert Lutuli of South Africa*.

¹⁰⁹ UKZN, APC&SA, PC2/9/29/1, correspondence from E. V. Mahomed to C. R. Swart, 25 June 1959.

¹¹⁰ Jean Hill, "Autobiography of Jean Hill", 41.

Interview with Jean Hill, Berea Congregational Church, 19 October 2008.

¹¹¹ SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 433-4.

Paton responded in the press that it was “wonderful news”.¹¹² Paton continued, that “one of her sons had been chosen to receive such an honour” instilled pride in South Africans.¹¹³

Luthuli confirmed that the awarding of the Prize stiffened his resolve to advocate only non-violent means despite the ANC and the Joint Congresses’ decision in July. Luthuli’s non-violent stance led him farther away from leadership in the ANC and increased his links, in company and ideology, with the Liberal Party. In a 01 November correspondence to the Liberal Party, Luthuli expressed deep appreciation for the many congratulatory telegrams and letters that he received from the branches and highlighted his renewed resolve for non-violent methods.

In case I am not able to answer them all individually would you express my deep gratitude and say that I feel this award is an encouragement to us all to redouble our struggle to achieve liberation by non-violent methods.¹¹⁴

Upon his arrival at the Johannesburg airport while connecting to London, the Liberal Party presented Luthuli with a wrist watch that he regarded “as an expression of a deep bond of friendship that exists between your Party and myself” despite “differences of opinion on tactics in our common fight for freedom”.¹¹⁵

Political accolades for Luthuli were not limited to those from the Liberal Party. Jan Steytler, leader of the Progressive Party, reacted after hearing the news saying:

I am very happy to hear that my fellow South African has been awarded this coveted prize. That an African should have been considered worthy

¹¹² *Gazette*, “Nobel Peace Prize for Luthuli: A Lift for South Africa’s Prestige”, 24 October 1961.

¹¹³ *Gazette*, “Nobel Peace Prize for Luthuli: A Lift for South Africa’s Prestige”, 24 October 1961.

¹¹⁴ UKZN, APC&SA, PC2/3/7/1, correspondence to Peter Brown from Luthuli, 01 November 1961. Also found at LM.

UKZN, APC&SA, no reference provided, correspondence from the Chairman of the Transvaal Division, Liberal Party to Luthuli, 25 October 1961. Also found at LM.

¹¹⁵ UKZN, APC&SA, PC2/3/4/2, correspondence from Luthuli to the Chairman of the National Executive of the Liberal Party, 23 March 1962. Also found at LM.

The differences related to opinions on qualified franchise. The Liberal Party publicly advocated for a qualified while Luthuli and the ANC advocated for universal franchise.

of it is an achievement of which all South Africa should be proud. He deserves it.¹¹⁶

The Most Reverend Joost de Blank, Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of the Church of the Province of South Africa, on behalf of the Episcopal Synod sent a telegram to Luthuli congratulating him:

We, the Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa, congratulate you on the distinction you have earned in winning the Nobel Peace Prize for 1960. We recall with satisfaction that you are a past Vice-President of the Christian Council of South Africa.¹¹⁷

A close association existed between Christianity practiced by white South African liberals in the early 1960s and an espousal for non-violence. A prominent black member in the Liberal Party, 'Bill' Bhengu, emphasised Luthuli's non-violent stance as a reason for the Liberal Party's support of him:

Luthuli was born and bred in a missionary's home. His whole background is steeped in Christianity, and in the supreme teaching "Do unto others as you would unto you". He merely preached this.¹¹⁸

Charles Hill expressed much the same sentiments as Bhengu, contrasting Luthuli's Christianity with Swart's presumption that Luthuli advocated violence.

[I] had heard Luthuli on many occasions, but [I] do not remember a single occasion where Luthuli ever deviated from the basic preachings of Christianity. However, Mr. Swart revealed to Parliament a tremendous discovery that Luthuli had spoken to the Overseas BBC network that the non-Europeans will not seek their goals always by meek submission. Was not this proof enough that Luthuli preached violence, asked Mr. Swart?¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ *Gazette*, "Nobel Peace Prize for Luthuli: A Lift for South Africa's Prestige", 24 October 1961. The Progressive Party broke away from the United Party in 1959. In many ways, it was similar to the Liberal Party especially as regards its qualified franchise policy.

¹¹⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Luthuli Sees World Press: Too Busy to Apply for Passport", 26 October 1961.

¹¹⁸ UKZN, APC&SA, P2/9/29/1, "Report on Protest Meeting", 1.

¹¹⁹ UKZN, APC&SA, P2/9/29/1, "Report on Protest Meeting", 2.

The Liberal Party, like the Black Sash mentioned earlier in this study, and white middle class progressive Christians found in Luthuli a kindred soul in large part due to his staunch non-violent stance. As chapter two mentions, in 1959 the ANC and the Liberal Party jointly called for a boycott of European goods as a non-violent strategy to achieve liberation. The shared belief in non-violence superseded differences over qualified franchise. If the Liberal Party, the Black Sash and white progressive Christians did not explicitly state non-violence was a central tenet of their creed, it was because non-violence was assumed and, for all intents and purposes, non-debatable.

Forestall through the Press

Events occurring during the latter half of 1961 comprise the fulcrum upon which this study focuses: the decision to form *MK*, the announcement of the Peace Prize and the publication of Luthuli's columns advocating non-violent methods. The plethora of statements from Luthuli advocating 'strategic pacifism' began in October 1961 after he received the news that he had won the Peace Prize. The announcement of the Peace Prize entrenched and bolstered Luthuli's non-violent stance, if it did not lead him to question his earlier yielding to democratic decisions arrived at by beleaguered and exhausted majorities within the July NEC and CJE meetings. Luthuli did not likely comprehend that after Sharpeville, the exile of Tambo, the State of Emergency and the May strike, he functioned as only the symbolic leader of the ANC.¹²⁰ Luthuli thought that he could, by privilege of his leadership position, forestall through the press any plans for *MK*'s activation in light of *the ANC's* winning the Peace Prize.

Luthuli made many references in his gracious acceptance statements that the Peace Prize had not been awarded to him alone. Rather, in his view the Nobel committee had also awarded the Peace Prize to the ANC and even the continent of Africa. Luthuli viewed himself as a representative saying, "This is an honour for the whole of Africa. If I falter, the whole people will suffer a setback".¹²¹ By articulating the rationale that as the leader of the ANC he accepted its reward on its behalf and as the oppressed majority in

¹²⁰ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 27. Pillay cited:

P. Ritner, *The Death of Africa* (New York: MacMillan, 1960).

¹²¹ *Daily News*, "Luthuli Wants to Go to Oslo for His Nobel Prize", 24 October 1961.

South Africa asked him to serve as President-General, Luthuli hoped to send a message to ANC members not make the turn to violence.¹²² In response to a query related to the rationale for his winning the Nobel Peace Prize, Luthuli replied:

I think I won the [Nobel Peace Prize] because I was leader of the African National Congress and generally of our liberation movement here. The ANC and its allies had decided to carry out its struggle along non-violent lines. It was my happy task to help implement that decision, and I think, because I was leader of the movement, I became a symbol of the people and their peaceful actions. I must say that I would not pigeon-hole myself as a pacifist. I would not hesitate to give my hand if my country went to war. But on practical consideration it would be suicidal in the circles today to abandon our policy of non-violence.¹²³

The ANC has published many times that “When that [non-violent] policy was officially and constitutionally changed, [Luthuli] did not falter”.¹²⁴ Yet, what can be debated is when the ANC’s policy “officially and constitutionally changed”. Does the ANC’s claim refer to the July 1961 agreement not to discipline those who were given permission to form a new violent organisation? Or, does it refer to the Lobatse Conference, when the ANC acknowledged MK as its own?¹²⁵ Because the government

¹²² Mohammed Meghaoui claimed that the ANC mandated that “he accept it on behalf of the ANC and not in his personal capacity”. This claim is spurious. On 23 October, the Nobel Committee announced Luthuli would receive the award. The ANC could not have met, decided and communicated this mandate before Luthuli made his humble remarks the following day. Luthuli’s remarks emanated, first, from his self-effacing nature, second, from his and the ANC’s collective culture rather than from a specific mandate and, third, as a rationale to convince the ANC not to initiate violence.

UFH, HPAL, ANCA, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, draft article by Mohammed Meghraoui, 31 August 1967.

¹²³ *Cape Argus*, “Luthuli Proud – But With a New Burden”, 24 October 1961.

Star, “Added Burden upon People of Liberation Movement”, 24 October 1961.

Benson told in her biography of Luthuli’s response to the question, “When had you first begun to believe in non-violence?” Luthuli responded, “I wouldn’t say that there was ever a time when I consciously decided and said – now look, I am here deciding for non-violence. For one thing, when I came into Congress, the campaigns it was planning were in fact on non-violent lines and one was happy to fit in with that”.

Benson, *Chief Albert Lutuli of South Africa*, 64.

¹²⁴ ANC, “The Lutuli Page”, www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/lutuli/, accessed 25 June 2008, 4.

UCT, LC, MAD, BC 1081, P 28, “In Memory”, *Spotlight on South Africa* 5, no. 30, 05 August 1967, 3.

Albert Lutuli, *Lutuli Speaks: Portrait of Chief Lutuli* (Solidarity Committee of the German...in cooperation with the United Nations Centre Against..., 1982), 6.

Luthuli, *The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross*, 3: 5.

¹²⁵ Bunting related that no formal resolutions were taken on the use of violence at Lobatse. Rather, the ‘turn to violence’ was accepted and approved in private “talks held outside the conference hall”.

Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 273.

Yengwa stated the “subject of sabotage was not very controversial and the conference unanimously agreed to embark on the armed struggle”.

declared the ANC illegal in 1960, the ANC could not “officially and constitutionally” change its policy; that is, it could not consult and receive a domestic mandate from the grassroots through its democratic structures. Whether one considers, for the sake of argument, the July NEC and CJE meetings or the November 1962 Lobatse Conference, the answer remains the same: Luthuli did not agree with, nor did he consider that the ANC supported, an armed movement from October 1961 when the Nobel committee announced his award to at least 1964 when in his Rivonia statement he indicated that the ANC had “never abandoned its method of a militant, non-violent struggle”.

After October 1961, Luthuli suspected and feared *MK*’s possible launch and he utilised the press to attempt to forestall it. The decisions taken by the NEC and the CJE to form *MK* did not at all restrain Luthuli’s advocacy for strict non-violence for two reasons. First, the meetings decided to form but not launch *MK*. Second, Luthuli continued to make the important qualification that the ANC and *MK* were separate (though linked) organisations. With these qualifications, Luthuli continued to assert his and the ANC’s non-violent stand. In the ensuing months, these qualifications would prove for Luthuli to be integrity saving loopholes.

By indicating that Luthuli “did not falter”, the ANC can only imply that he did not condemn the use of violence. If the ANC intended to imply that Luthuli himself made the switch to violence, the implication is false as Luthuli did nothing but advocate for the use of peaceful methods. Three days after the announcement that Luthuli won the Peace Prize, Michael Lloyd mused that he was the “umpteenth newsman” to interview him in Groutville. In this interview, Luthuli disputed that he was a “moderate” and emphasised his militant credentials.

I am a militant, but in my militancy I pursue the struggle along peaceful lines. We feel that it is better to get our freedom with as few scars as

LM, MYP, unpublished draft autobiographical manuscript, 108.

Bunting’s appraisal is likely. The NEC in a statement emanating from the ANC’s first conference as a banned organisation implied, but did not state explicitly, that it considered *MK* and the ANC to be linked. The statement described *MK* as “the military wing of our struggle...”. Karis and Carter’s appraisal serves as an appropriate compromise.

“The People Accept the Challenge of the Nationalists”, statement “issued by the National Executive of the ANC”, 06 April 1963, Document 69, 749. Found in: Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*, 3: 650.

possible... We will pursue our struggle for equal rights, and we will pursue it by peaceful means up to the limit.¹²⁶

In an interview with Benson on 28 October, Luthuli stated:

I think they gave me the Nobel Peace Prize because they quite correctly believe I was the leader of a liberation movement that pursued non-violence...¹²⁷

Days after the announcement, Theo Greyling of the South African Broadcasting Corporation prepared a ten minute radio documentary that condescendingly questioned Luthuli's credentials and worthiness to win the Peace Prize. In response, Paton of the Liberal Party, Steytler of the Progressive Party and much of the liberal South African public hurled abuse at the SABC.¹²⁸ In response to this highly publicly criticised radio broadcast, Luthuli fired off an angry letter to the *Rand Daily Mail* saying, "All I can say is that I will continue to stand for the prosecution of our freedom struggle along peaceful lines".¹²⁹

With the July meetings in mind, Luthuli was well aware that many of the oppressed were becoming impatient and more militant. During the week of the announcement, Luthuli made desperate pleas to South African Whites to change heart. Haunted by the July meetings that decided to form *MK*, Luthuli made similar pleas for reconciliation. In two August columns in the *Post*, Luthuli warned that "time is running out on us in the Republic of South Africa".¹³⁰ As others involved in the struggle expressed a greater sense of anxiety and impatience; Luthuli increasingly lost the ability to 'hold the centre'. Countries throughout the African continent, beginning with Ghana in 1957, were being added to the list of free and independent countries on a monthly

¹²⁶ *Sunday Tribune*, "Lutuli – The Impact of a Personality", by Michael Lloyd, 29 October 1961.

¹²⁷ *Observer*, "'You There, Luthuli...'", by Mary Benson, 29 October 1961.

¹²⁸ *Daily News*, "No SABC Comment Available on Lutuli Talk", 27 October 1961.

Cape Times, "Protests after Attack on Lutuli: SABC Talk Described as 'Vicious'", 27 October 1961.

¹²⁹ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Insult to Nobel Prize Committee – Luthuli", 27 October 1961.

In defense of integrity, the SABC later only lamely asserted that the broadcast was "factual".

Natal Mercury, "Luthuli Not Allowed to Go to 'Honour' Meeting", 28 October 1961.

¹³⁰ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "A Fateful Choice in the Election", 13 August 1961.

"...if the idea of separateness and 'keeping the other man down' persists, the consequences will be as alarming as they are obvious".

BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "It's People Who Make Nations", 27 August 1961.

basis.¹³¹ A continental spirit of 'Independence Now!' was in the air. Despite this revolutionary climate, Luthuli proved consistent with his primary strategic method of non-violence.

In addition to prevailing upon the white electorate to have a change of heart, Luthuli pinned to his black colleagues to remain fast to non-violent methods.

TO MY FELLOW AFRICANS I say: "Let us continue to exercise patience and forbearance, even in a situation that provokes a spirit of enmity. We must stand for the realisation of friendship among all people of South Africa" (Luthuli's emphasis).¹³²

In November, Guy Butler and Z. K. Matthews spoke at a public meeting in honour of Luthuli at the Girl Guides Hall in Grahamstown. Much disingenuous contestation surrounded the planning of the meeting as permission for a venue for a multi-racial gathering proved very difficult to obtain.¹³³ Of course, Luthuli could not attend this event. His statement of appreciation to the gathering is significant, for it documents again Luthuli's disapproval of the Joint Congresses' July decision to turn towards violence. Luthuli concludes his statement:

This award brings with it an added responsibility and a challenge to carry on the struggle by non-violent means through the grim times that lie ahead of us.¹³⁴

Luthuli spoke with many well-known and credible journalists in November and December 1961; in many he harped on the continued use of non-violent methods. In mid-November 1961, one journalist, Benjamin Pogrand, held an in depth interview with Luthuli.¹³⁵ During the interview Luthuli stressed:

¹³¹ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "It's Great to be Alive in Africa Today!", 26 November 1961. In this article, Luthuli is conflicted. Luthuli blithely comments upon the problems of Ghana, Congo and Portuguese West Africa.

¹³² *Sunday Times*, "Luthuli: Not Much Time Left to Save S. Africa", 29 October 1961.

¹³³ *EPH*, "Public Meeting in Honour of Lutuli", 30 November 1961.

EPH, "Trouble at Lutuli Meeting Feared", 01 December 1961.

EPH, "Professor Makes Plea for Unity", 04 December 1961.

¹³⁴ UKZN, APC&SA, PC62/1/1/3, Albert Luthuli, "Message to Grahamstown Meeting", 16 November 1961. Also found at LM.

¹³⁵ Benjamin Pogrand was a close friend of Robert Sobukwe and his biographer.

Africans dare not forsake the path of non-violence. To do so would lead to disaster both for themselves and for South Africa. It is true that we have not had great success in the past in the achievement of our aims by following non-violent methods. But this does not mean that the methods have failed us – only that we have failed the methods...It is my hope that the successful application by Africans of non-violent methods will exert sufficient pressure on white South Africa to cause Whites to say, "We can't go on like this. Let us sit down and discuss our mutual problems". It is the task of the Africans to organise and discipline themselves so as to make the fullest use of non-violent methods to bring this about.¹³⁶

In the above *Rand Daily Mail* interview, Luthuli summarised the debates held in the NWC, NEC and CJE meetings. Luthuli even quoted J. N. Singh's comment regarding the efficacy of non-violent tactics.¹³⁷ Pogrund continued to explain that the methods Luthuli had in mind included Stay-at-Homes, demonstrations and "non-collaboration" generally – all of which were accepted throughout the civilised world as democratic and peaceful ways of registering protest against government policy. Pogrund revealed Luthuli's position that 'up to now, Africans had not made the fullest possible use of these methods – and it was wrong for them to think that they had exhausted non-violent tactics'. Pogrund quoted Luthuli:

Even the highest form – the Stay-at-Home has not been employed to the fullest extent. No stay at home by Africans has yet been fully supported... I wish the government would assist us in continuing along a non-violent path. It is not easy to guide our people when the government and its leaders constantly talk and act in terms of force. Despite this, we shall continue to exert pressure through non-violent means. We will continue to be (sic) the legitimate kind of pressure used all over the world.¹³⁸

Judging from newspaper clippings, it appears that at every opportunity Luthuli declared that non-violence is not just a method, but The Method. In a conversation on

¹³⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Non-Violence Is Path to Freedom – Luthuli", by Benjamin Pogrund, 14 November 1961.

¹³⁷ Luthuli's quotation of Singh substantiates Mandela and Yengwa's assertions that he was in fact present at the July 1961 CJE meeting.

¹³⁸ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Non-Violence Is Path to Freedom – Luthuli", 14 November 1961.

23 November 1961 with J. J. Hurley, ambassador to Canada in Pretoria, Luthuli affirmed “that it would in his opinion be ‘suicidal folly’ to try to overthrow the government by force”.¹³⁹

More interviews in November record Luthuli’s sentiments regarding violence after the collective decision to form *MK* and before his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo in December of 1961. Daniel McGeachie wrote for the British paper *Daily Express*, a publication generally sympathetic to the South African government. McGeachie’s seven hundred word report sent by cable through the South African postal service was stopped and held, thus producing a storm of outraged ‘letters to the editor’ from white, black, liberal and nationalist journalists as an attack on freedom of the press.¹⁴⁰ In McGeachie’s article, Luthuli vented exactly what he feared:

Non-violent agitation will win and I still think that the majority of black South Africa is behind me. Stories that there are plans of violence may be government propaganda. The government wants a show-down. They want us to fight so that they have an excuse to mow us down.¹⁴¹

If one incorrectly understands that the NEC and CJE decisions authorised *MK*’s formation and launch, then Luthuli’s hypothesis printed in the *Cape Times* that “stories” of impending violence derived from “government propaganda” suggest that he did not participate nor was informed about decisions made by the July 1961 meetings.

What then explains Luthuli’s November 1961 statement to Pogrand that “talk of violence is government propaganda” designed to incite Blacks and thus violently defeat them with cause? What then explains pre-*Long Walk to Freedom* narratives of Luthuli’s anger at being marginalised from the decision to form *MK*, Mandela’s “disconcerting conversation with Luthuli” and Mandela’s confirmation that Luthuli was present and chaired the meetings that approved the resolution to form an armed movement? Evidence confirms Luthuli chaired and yielded to the July decision to form *MK*. In October, the Nobel committee announced Luthuli’s winning of the Peace Prize. Hereafter, Luthuli desired that the ANC take full advantage of the extensive opportunities

¹³⁹ Sampson, *Mandela*, 159. See footnote 103, 599.

¹⁴⁰ *Times*, “Luthuli Cable Banned”, 15 November 1961.

¹⁴¹ *Cape Times*, “Afrikaans Press Told Why Luthuli Cable Was Held”, 20 November 1961.

the Peace Prize offered by forestalling an activation of violent strategies and continue to only employ non-violent methods. Luthuli's anger at Mandela soon after *MK*'s launch stemmed not from his not "being consulted about the formation of *MK*" but rather from the failure to consult or inform Luthuli about *MK*'s *launch*. No one informed Luthuli of the impending launch he suspected and feared. Luthuli's stated public hypothesis that 'talk of violence' was a government ploy to goad Blacks into violence was a means to express fear of and to publicly forestall the imminent move from one decision (formation) to another (activation). Given the ANC's illegal status and the great difficulty in gathering the leadership, the media would be the best way to issue imperatives to not proceed further from the earlier decision to form *MK* in light of new developments (Nobel Peace Prize). The October announcement of Luthuli's Nobel Peace Prize and the non-violent struggle for liberation rapidly and dramatically extended the road previously thought in July to be a cul-de-sac. Luthuli re-assessed the now promisingly effective non-violent tactics in light of the international publicity and sympathy and, as the President-General, re-doubled his advocacy for an exclusively non-violent struggle. Luthuli from October to December repeatedly emphasised through the press, a desperate need to cancel, revisit and/or postpone any implementation of plans by the newly formed organisation.

Between October 1961 and December 1961, Luthuli spoke most clearly about the need for non-violence. During this time, Luthuli thoroughly articulated why some might resort to violence because he had recently in July listened to them. From October international attention made the imperative for and benefits of non-violence even stronger. During this time, Luthuli made a profound distinction between "young people" and "the leadership" that he much later echoed in 1964 as the "young people" were sentenced to life-imprisonment.

"You would expect people to start questioning and asking, 'How long would these white men take advantage of our seeming docility?' It would not be surprising to find some, particularly young people, beginning to question the efficacy of non-violence when they face so aggressive a government. If the oppressed people here ever came to indulge in violent ways that would be a reaction against the policy of government in suppressing them. However much you may disagree with them, you

cannot *blame* them. But the leadership”, he added, “stand by the non-violent method” (emphasis Benson’s and hence Luthuli’s).¹⁴²

Before departing for Norway, Luthuli had little time to contemplate how he would utilise the prize money. In keeping with his faith-based convictions, Luthuli would discern a manner in which the funds would be put to good use to forward the liberation struggle non-violently. When questioned about what he would do with the R 31,112.00 prize money, Luthuli responded:

It is not in my mind at the present moment. I have only been thinking of the spiritual importance of the hour, and what it means in terms of the spiritual encouragement and the added responsibility that it brings.¹⁴³

Luthuli eventually used the prize money to purchase two farms in Swaziland. Some historians proposed that Luthuli’s purchase of two farms counter Buthelezi’s evocation of “Luthuli’s name when advocating non-violent change in South Africa” and provided evidence that Luthuli supported the ANC’s pursuit of the armed struggle.¹⁴⁴ Luthuli purchased the farms to offer humanitarian relief to refugees, whether they were violent refugees or non-violent refugees would have been immaterial. The purchase of farms for refugee relief can more accurately be characterised as a unique non-violent endeavour to support the struggle. No literature suggests that the farms served as military bases, training centres or launch sites for armed incursions.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, Nokukhanya remarked, “Unfortunately, there were never many refugees staying at the farms”.¹⁴⁶ Only Yengwa and Conco visited a few times. Many clues reveal that the venture failed. Nokukhanya purchased the farms and supervised all the work. She “spent long periods away from home” (six months a year) and “experienced the hardships of life as a woman

¹⁴² Benson, *Chief Albert Luthuli of South Africa*, 65.

¹⁴³ *Rand Daily Mail*, “Ex-Chief Will Apply for Passport”, 24 October 1961.

¹⁴⁴ Sithole, “Chief Albert Luthuli” in *Zulu Identities*, Carton, Laband and Sithole, 337.

¹⁴⁵ The media reported that “no political significance is attached to the purchase” of 100 hundred acre farm. Publication unknown, “Luthuli Buys a Farm in Swaziland”, by Brian Rudden, date unknown.

¹⁴⁶ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 136.

on her own in a strange country".¹⁴⁷ She joined the workers in the field and ran a farm store to "earn a bit more money".¹⁴⁸ Nokukhanya explained:

I had to tolerate a lot from some men who were very troublesome. They could not understand why I, a woman, was there on the farm. For them it was a man's job. This is the kind of attitude I had to put up with. Because I was alone and vulnerable they tried to intimidate me...At night I was all alone because the workers did not want to stay in the farm compound and they all went away to their farms.¹⁴⁹

The farms served primarily as commercial ventures whereby the proceeds of produce grown would contribute to the liberation movement. If the farms' purpose was to support the armed movement or refugees of the armed movement, then the ANC would have supported and utilised the farms. The ANC would have also felt obligated to assist its ailing and banned President-General's wife, not tolerating her sacrificial and solitary toiling. Rule's book indicates that any profit made on the farms went toward helping the ANC in London. In accordance with Luthuli's will, the money from the sale of the farms after his death contributed to the Luthuli Educational Trust to fund scholarships and to assist schools with libraries and books. All things considered, it is reasonable to conclude that Luthuli intended that the farms purchased with the Nobel Peace Prize money contribute to non-violent methods of resistance.

Nobel Peace Prize Received

Many newspaper editors and political commentators debated the pros and cons of Luthuli's Nobel Peace Prize as one drama after another unfolded. What would be the reaction of the South African government? Would the government grant Luthuli a passport?¹⁵⁰ Would he be allowed to travel outside of Oslo? Pro-National Party or not,

¹⁴⁷ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 132.

¹⁴⁸ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 133.

¹⁴⁹ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 133.

¹⁵⁰ If the government refused, Luthuli indicated he would apply for a Rhodesian passport on the basis of his Rhodesian birth.

Sunday Times, "He Could Get Rhodesian Passport: Luthuli Had Plan If Govt. Said No", 11 November 1961.

universal opinion was that it would do the government far more harm than good to prohibit Luthuli's travels and deny him a passport as a consequence of his political ban. For the government, the decision whether to allow Luthuli's attendance was a lose/lose proposition. If allowed to attend, Luthuli would effectively denounce the South African government's policy of Apartheid. If they denied Luthuli permission to travel, the government would have the rather ironic privilege of accepting it on his behalf through a representative with diplomatic or consular status.¹⁵¹

The government bitterly disputed Luthuli's worthiness to receive the Peace Prize and in doing so incriminated itself. Instead of remaining silent, the government issued petty and condescending vitriol through the Minister of the Interior, Senator Jan de Klerk.¹⁵² On 27 October, Luthuli applied to the Ministry of the Interior for the lifting of his travel ban and a passport.¹⁵³ The application itself was short-sighted in that it requested only a "few days" and included a trip to Tanganyika (Tanzania) to celebrate that country's independence.¹⁵⁴ Rather than Tanganyika, Luthuli should have applied to visit Sweden, England or even the United States after receiving news of winning the Peace Prize as invitations would likely be received to visit these countries.¹⁵⁵ Later, and well into his sojourn on 11 December, Luthuli and the Swedish government applied for him to travel to and speak in Sweden "as Nobel Peace Prize winners normally do".¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ *Daily News*, "Diplomats Intrigued at Poser", 25 October 1961.

Star, "Diplomat Could Collect Prize", 25 October 1961.

Daily News, "Let Lutuli Go to Oslo", 27 October 1961.

Daily News, "How Not to Do It", 06 November 1961.

Only once before had a Nobel Peace Prize recipient been denied the opportunity to travel and accept the award. Carl von Ossietzky who won the award was unable to claim it as he was in a German concentration camp. Ossietzky won the 1935 Prize and, similar to Luthuli, reserved to the following year.

¹⁵² Publication unknown, "Lutuli Goes to Oslo – But Not Tanganyika", 08 November 1961.

¹⁵³ *Natal Mercury*, "Luthuli Not Allowed to Go to 'Honour' Meeting", 28 October 1961.

The application was received on 31 October 1961.

Publication unknown, "No Decision Yet on Lutuli", 01 November 1961.

¹⁵⁴ *Star*, "'No' to Request for Tanganyika Visit", 03 November 1961.

In fact, the oversight not to include Sweden in the passport application's itinerary can be considered a grievous mistake by the Nobel Committee and Luthuli. Only the Nobel Peace Prize is received in Oslo. All other Nobel prizes are awarded in Stockholm, Sweden. Customarily, the Nobel laureate for Peace would join the all other laureates for a conference in Stockholm.

Interview with Tor Sellström, Senior Advisor of the African Centre of the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, Luthuli Museum, Groutville, Kwadukuza, 27 June 2008.

¹⁵⁵ *Star*, "Luthuli Invited to Tour America", 25 October 1961.

¹⁵⁶ Publication unknown, "Longer Stay Asked For", 11 December 1961.

Luthuli was invited by the Christian Brotherhood Movement. Luthuli sent his application to the South African legation in Stockholm. The South African government replied negatively on 12 December 1961.

The application was unsuccessful. Meanwhile, the Minister of Justice, John Vorster, refused Luthuli's application to attend a gathering on 28 October in Stanger at which "an enthusiastic crowd of over nine hundred" gathered to celebrate the Nobel honour.¹⁵⁷ At the gathering, Paton read a song of praise.

You there, Luthuli. They thought your world was small.
They thought you lived in Groutville.
Now they discover it's the world you live in.
You there, Luthuli. They thought your name was small. Luthuli of
Groutville, now they discover your name is everywhere.
You there, Luthuli. They thought you were chained like a backyard dog.
Now they discovered they are in prison but you are free.
You there, Luthuli. They took your name of chief. You were not worthy.
Now they discover you are more chief than ever.
Go well, Luthuli. May your days be long. Your country cannot spare you.
Win for us also, Luthuli, the prize of peace.¹⁵⁸

Many accounts of this time erroneously state that the government delayed and/or initially refused to grant Luthuli a passport until the last minute.¹⁵⁹ This characterisation of the government's response to Luthuli's application is inaccurate. In fact, the government having received the application late on 31 October, could at the earliest have reviewed the application on 01 November. On 06 November de Klerk made a statement granting the passports for the couple.¹⁶⁰ The Luthulis received the passports on 23 November.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the government granted Luthuli more days abroad than he requested in his application, realising that due to "practical reasons" he would need more time.¹⁶² The government felt that Luthuli's request did not take into consideration travel delays, connecting travel and "time to relax after a long journey before such an important

Daily News, "No Extension for Lutuli: He Must Return This Week", 12 December 1961.

¹⁵⁷ *Daily News*, "The Special Branch Go to 'Lutuli' Meeting", 28 October 1961.

Another newspaper report recorded "more than 1,200".

Sunday Tribune, "1,200 Gather to Honour Lutuli", 29 October 1961.

¹⁵⁸ *Observer*, "'You There, Luthuli...'", by Mary Benson, 29 October 1961.

¹⁵⁹ Kally, *The Struggle*, 1.

Worse, Kally's text stated that the government "took away his passport". The historical narrative continued in error by indicating, "It was a year later that the government relented and gave him a very restricted passport for a few days to be outside the country" (1).

¹⁶⁰ *Star*, "Luthuli on Rand on December 5", 24 November 1961.

¹⁶¹ Publication unknown, "Passports for Lutulis", 24 November 1961.

¹⁶² Publication unknown, "Lutuli Goes to Oslo – But Not Tanganyika", 08 November 1961.

event".¹⁶³ Though efficient in its approval, the government's granting of a passport was nonetheless begrudging, ungracious and included many loosely defined restrictions, for example that he not make any political statements nor tarnish South Africa's image. In addition, a meeting that was planned in London between Christian Action, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and Luthuli was cancelled due to restrictions placed in his passport.

Luthuli was inconsistent in his willingness to be obedient to the government's conditions for travel. For example, Luthuli indicated he would abide by government decisions that would limit his speaking "at functions other than at the official Peace Prize ceremony" but clearly did not abide by its directive to refrain from making political statements that might tarnish South Africa's image.¹⁶⁴ Luthuli wrote to de Klerk on two occasions: once to ask if he could attend social gatherings and once to ask if he could travel to places in Norway outside Oslo. The minister responded to the former in the affirmative while the latter query was left answered.¹⁶⁵ Luthuli felt obliged to turn down an invitation to address a religious meeting in Norway's oldest cathedral, Stavanger, because his passport conditions confined him to Oslo.

On 10 November, over ten thousand attended a rally at Curries Fountain Sports Stadium in Durban. Of course, Vorster denied Luthuli the opportunity to attend. Luthuli again tried to re-address the decisions made in July through his statement that affirmed that the award was an "encouragement to continue by non-violent means the struggle for freedom and justice for all".¹⁶⁶ Also in November, Luthuli assembled his staff that would accompany him while in Norway at their own expense. On 09 November, Luthuli wrote to Mary-Louise Hooper in San Francisco requesting her service.¹⁶⁷ On 10 November, he wrote to Tambo who was in New York formally asking him to be a part of his staff in Oslo with Robert Resha.¹⁶⁸ There would indeed be much work to be done, receiving and responding to correspondences and telegrams.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Publication unknown, "Lutuli Goes to Oslo – But Not Tanganyika", 08 November 1961.

¹⁶⁴ *Evening Post*, "Lutuli Composes His World Speech in Solitude", 02 December 1961.

Times, "Mr. Luthuli Bound by Conditions: No Political Speeches in Norway", 04 December 1961, 9b.

¹⁶⁵ *Daily News*, "Mr. Lutuli Met by Songs and Freezing Cold", 07 December 1961.

¹⁶⁶ *Daily News*, "More Than 10,000 Attend Rally to Honour Lutuli", 10 November 1961.

¹⁶⁷ UFH, HPAL, ANCA, A2561, Box 70, Folder C 3.9, correspondence from Luthuli to Mary-Louise Hooper, 09 November 1961.

¹⁶⁸ UFH, HPAL, ANCA, A2561, Box 70, Folder C 3.9, correspondence from Luthuli to Oliver Tambo, 10 November 1961.

Approximately two weeks before his departure for Norway, Luthuli devoted most of his time in Groutville to composing his acceptance speech and Nobel lecture. Few, if any, interviews were granted. After a prayer service on the morning of 05 December, Mahomed drove Luthuli and his wife in a convertible coupe from Groutville to Durban, arriving at 10:30 for lunch at the Himalaya Hotel in Durban's 'Indian quarter', and in convoy to Louis Botha Airport for a 15:00 flight to Johannesburg.¹⁷⁰ Upon his arrival in Durban, thousands swarmed in the streets to greet Luthuli. At the airport, the authorities requested Luthuli to instruct the crowd to depart the "Whites Only" airport hall. Luthuli graciously invited the crowd outside where he joined them in song.¹⁷¹ The flight from Durban to Johannesburg was delayed for forty-five minutes due to a "technical hitch".¹⁷² The Luthulis were scheduled to depart Johannesburg for London at 17:15 and arrive at 09:00. However, a second delay occurred when after take-off, the aircraft had to return to the Johannesburg airport due to technical problems related to its pressurisation system.¹⁷³ This second delay must have caused Luthuli great distress. Surprisingly, no press reports conveyed suspicion that the government may have orchestrated both delays to examine Luthuli's luggage contents or to frustrate itineraries that included meetings with anti-Apartheid organisations. One press article reported oddly that as the aircraft returned to Jan Smuts airport, "the engineer of the Comet fell ill...and has been taken to a nursing home".¹⁷⁴ The flight to London was delayed until the morning of the 6th. The Luthulis ate their supper in the upstairs airport lounge while the white passengers ate at the ground

Billy Modise also attended the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. Modise joined the ANC in 1955, led students at Fort Hare University and served on the Executive of NUSAS (National Union of South African Students). In 1960, Modise illegally left South Africa to accept a scholarship at Lund University in Sweden. While studying medicine, Modise involved himself heavily in anti-Apartheid politics, so much so that he ultimately chose to study sociology.

¹⁶⁹ UFH, HPAL, ANCA, A2561, Box 70, Folder C 3.0, correspondence to Luthuli from the Vice-President of International Affairs, Finn Fostervoll of the National Union of Norwegian Students (Norsk Studentsamband), 13 December 1961 and dictated correspondence from Luthuli to Kurt Kristianson of the National Council of Swedish Youth, 14 December 1961.

¹⁷⁰ *Evening Post*, "Lutuli Composes His World Speech in Solitude", 02 December 1961.

Daily News, "Send-Off of the Lutulis", 04 December 1961.

Publication Unknown, "Luthuli's Oslo Trip Is Under No Restrictions, but...", 02 December 1961.

¹⁷¹ *Daily News*, "Lutuli Greeted by Cheering Crowd", 05 December 1961.

¹⁷² *Times*, "Mr. Luthuli in London Today: Delayed Flight from S. Africa", 07 December 1961, 12g.

¹⁷³ *Times*, "Mr. Luthuli's Departure Delayed: Night Spent at Airport", 06 December 1961.

¹⁷⁴ *Times*, "Mr. Luthuli in London Today: Delayed Flight from S. Africa", 07 December 1961, 12g.

floor restaurant. The Luthulis rested in the multi-racial terminal transit sleeping quarters while the other white passengers lodged at a local Johannesburg hotel.¹⁷⁵

Though expected in London at 09:00 on 06 December, the Luthulis did not arrive until 03:15 on the 7th, eighteen hours later.¹⁷⁶ Luthuli planned to enjoy a sightseeing tour of London and stay overnight at the Collins' home during his layover before travelling to Oslo. The delay prohibited both.¹⁷⁷ Despite their 03:15 arrival, over two hundred people waited patiently to greet them. Since the July meetings, very little contact between the ANC and Luthuli is recorded in the archives. Nonetheless, among those waiting at the airport were Tambo and Resha. Tambo served as Luthuli's 'manager' and secretary during Luthuli's visit to Europe. From London, the itinerary remained as originally planned. In London, Luthuli only slept for an hour and a half. The Luthulis departed London for Copenhagen, Denmark at 12:55 and arrived the same day at 18:50 in Oslo after a brief stop in Gothenburg, Sweden meeting dignitaries all along the way. In Gothenburg, Luthuli's old friend Helander boarded the plane to Oslo. On this flight, Helander asked Luthuli if he did not wish to seek political asylum in Norway or Sweden. Luthuli responded firmly in the negative saying "that his place was in South Africa, among his own people".¹⁷⁸ Luthuli's response proved consistent with his stance discouraging those in the struggle from fleeing the country into exile. Luthuli approved of only Tambo's 1960 departure from South Africa to diplomatically represent the ANC and later desired that Mandela return to South Africa from his 1962 African tour.

Immediately, during his arrival in snow-laden Oslo, Luthuli emphasised his non-violent principles in a broadcast interview saying "even today it would be possible for white and coloured people to live peacefully together in South Africa".¹⁷⁹ By 23:00 on the night of 07 December in Oslo, Luthuli captured his first good night's rest, in part

¹⁷⁵ *Daily News*, "Lutuli Is Off at Last", 06 December 1961.

¹⁷⁶ Rule or Nokukhanya herself confused the narrative. By Nokukhanya's account, after a seventeen hour delay at Jan Smuts, they experienced a second eighteen hour delay in Heathrow airport. The second delay did not occur. This is another example of inaccurate oral history being documented. Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 124.

¹⁷⁷ Publication unknown, "Gathering in London for Lutuli Is Off", 01 December 1961.

¹⁷⁸ *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 24 July 1967. Found in: Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, 1: 177. See footnote 7.

¹⁷⁹ *Times*, "Mr. Luthuli in Oslo", 08 December 1961.

Daily News, "Audience with King of Norway: Very Tired Luthuli Faces Busy Three Days", 08 December 1961.

Star, "Luthuli Suffering from Strain", 08 December 1961.

because Tambo, who was always worried about Luthuli's health, told many disappointed newsmen that Luthuli was going straight to bed after dinner. Tambo was so concerned about Luthuli's health that he sought out medical advice while in Oslo.

At 11:15 on 09 December, King Olav of Norway received Luthuli at the Royal Palace. Luthuli commented that his conversation with the King was very pleasant, "but of course we did not mention anything controversial about South African conditions".¹⁸⁰ That evening Luthuli held a press conference wherein he proclaimed his position on violence yet subtly warned of a possible impending launch of an organisation he knew the NEC and the CJE had already decided to form.

There was no animosity on the part of non-Whites in South Africa. The longer the suppression lasts, however, the greater the danger of violence. We might be pressed so far that efforts to those who try to lead the struggle along peaceful lines may be jeopardised.¹⁸¹

Implied within this statement is that the National Party regime jeopardised Luthuli's influence within the ANC due to his non-violent position. Because Luthuli continued to desperately plead to Mandela and the others through the press to hold off on any possible implementation, he made no mention to the press that Mandela and others had already converted to the violent option. More appeals 'to hold the line' would be made to his political colleagues in South Africa in the days ahead.

Luthuli received the Peace Prize on Sunday afternoon, 10 December and gave his Nobel address on Monday, 11 December. Perhaps the best account of Luthuli's acceptance of the Peace Prize came from Reuling, Luthuli's mentor and friend since their days at Adams, who dictated a seven page correspondence to the American Board in the Rome airport after departing Norway for Salisbury, Rhodesia. Reuling provided a personal account of his trials and tribulations in his attempts to proudly witness Luthuli receive one of world's most notable awards. Reuling was a wonderful story teller, making even his rental of a tuxedo and purchase of inexpensive cuff links for the award ceremony intriguing. Reuling justified his efforts to attend the Nobel gathering because:

¹⁸⁰ *Sunday Tribune*, "Now Lutuli Makes Bid to Stay On", 10 December 1961.

¹⁸¹ *Daily News*, "Big Crowd Will See Lutuli Receive His Nobel Prize", 09 December 1961.

Luthuli is a product of the American Board Missions, has been associated with our church for all his life, and also because of my nearly thirty-five year personal contact and friendship with him as a colleague at Adams College and during all those years since...¹⁸²

Upon his arrival in Oslo, Reuling disappointingly discovered that despite having his name, the Nobel Institute could only provide him a pass for one event that was already public. Even more disheartening, organisers told Reuling that:

Luthuli was besieged by committee members, television people, reporters and that hundreds who wanted to see him were being turned away.¹⁸³

Organisers shared with Reuling that he would have some difficulty in getting even a brief word with Luthuli. Officials declined all of Reuling's appeals for passes. As Reuling sulked after his last attempt to obtain a pass, a door suddenly opened and Luthuli accompanied by Nokukhanya appeared in the passage. The Luthulis instantly recognised Reuling. Luthuli...

...came rushing across and in the Zulu language began chattering away asking me about family, old missionary friends, etc., etc. We talked as hard as we could in Zulu without a word of English for six or eight minutes.¹⁸⁴

Reuling did not mention his predicament to Luthuli, not wishing to embarrass him. Following their verbose conversation, organisers provided Reuling special cards with his name inscribed upon them. Reuling thereafter encountered few difficulties.¹⁸⁵

In his 12 December correspondence, Reuling described in detail the events at the small and filled to capacity university auditorium on Sunday afternoon, 10 December

¹⁸² LM, correspondence from John Reuling to "Family and Friends", 12 December 1961. The Luthuli Museum acquired this correspondence from:

YU, DLSC, Record Group 120, John Reuling and Eleanor Reuling Personal Papers, Box 1, folder 1. Also found at Michigan State University, MS 257.

¹⁸³ LM, correspondence from John Reuling to "Family and Friends", 12 December 1961.

¹⁸⁴ LM, correspondence from John Reuling to "Family and Friends", 12 December 1961.

¹⁸⁵ Reuling suspected that in order for him to be given a dinner pass, someone most likely was asked to "stand down".

when Luthuli received the Nobel Peace Prize. Though the Nobel Committee's Chairperson, Gunnar Jahn, spoke entirely in Norwegian without translation, Reuling identified within the speech biographical references to Luthuli that included the American Board Mission, Adams College, his Christian training and quotations from some of Luthuli's speeches and writings.¹⁸⁶ Jahn emphatically commented upon Luthuli's stance on violence.

Never has Luthuli succumbed to the temptation to use violent means in the struggle for his people. Nothing has shaken him from this firm resolve, so firmly rooted in his conviction that violence and terror must not be employed... Well might we ask: will the non-Whites of South Africa, by their suffering, their humiliation and their patience, show the other nations of the world that human rights can be won without violence, by following a road to which we Europeans have committed both intellectually and emotionally, but which we have all too often abandoned? If the non-White people of South Africa ever lift themselves from their humiliation without resorting to violence and terror, then it will be above all because of the work of Luthuli, their fearless and incorruptible leader who, thanks to his own high ethical standards, has rallied his people in support of this policy, and who throughout his adult life has staked everything and suffered everything without bitterness and without allowing hatred and aggression to replace his abiding love of his fellow men. But if the day should come when the struggle of the non-Whites in South Africa to win their freedom denigrates into bloody slaughter, then Luthuli's voice will be heard no more. But let us remember him and never forget that his way was unwavering and clear. He would have not have had it so.¹⁸⁷

What was Luthuli thinking as he heard these words, prior to his being called forward to accept the Nobel Peace Prize? Popular South African history would have one believe that Luthuli, as President of the ANC since 1952, five months prior to receiving the Peace Prize supported the formation of *MK* and immediately after receiving it sanctioned the initiation of violence. In his autobiography, Mandela admitted this contradiction:

¹⁸⁶ Particularly, "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross".

¹⁸⁷ "Mr. [Gunnar] Jahn delivered this speech on 10 December 1961, in the auditorium of the University of Oslo. At its conclusion he presented the Peace Prize for 1960 (reserved that year) to Mr. Luthuli, who accepted [the Prize] in a brief speech. The English translation of Mr. Jahn's speech is, with certain editorial changes and emendations made after collation with the Norwegian text, that which is carried in *Les Prix Nobel en 1960*, which also includes the original Norwegian text". Asmal, Chidester and James, *South Africa's Nobel Laureates*, 20-1 and 274.

The honour came at an awkward time for it was juxtaposed against an announcement that seemed to call the award itself into question. The day after Luthuli returned from Oslo [16 December 1961], *MK* dramatically announced its emergence.¹⁸⁸

If the assumption that Luthuli sanctioned violence is true, what raced through Luthuli's mind as Jahn declared that Luthuli was "unwavering and clear" on his objection to violence? If Luthuli's position was not resolutely against violence, surely he would have experienced a sense of panic and anxiety as he listened to Jahn declare that 'if the liberation movement is to resist the temptation to use violence, it will be due to Luthuli's influence'.¹⁸⁹ If Luthuli's position was not resolutely against violence, undoubtedly he would have bristled as Jahn concluded that 'if the liberation movement ever resorted to violence, it will be due to an abandonment of Luthuli's voice'. Did Luthuli support the massive ethical and strategic change in the liberation movement's policy? If we assume the answer is 'Yes, Luthuli sanctioned the violence', did Jahn's introduction engender an existential dilemma within Luthuli? If this study exposes contemporary nationalist understandings as false and concludes, 'No, Luthuli did not waver in his belief that violence should not be employed as a means to achieve liberation', what can account for the prevailing politico-historical assumption that he provided consent for the armed struggle? John Allen, author of Tutu's authorised biography, provided a glimpse of the confusion that this study clarifies.

The Norwegians appear to have learned after the Prize was announced but before it was conferred that violence had become likely: Luthuli told at least one Norwegian in Oslo that notwithstanding his own feelings on the issue, he had felt bound at a meeting with the ANC's leaders some months earlier to accept a decision to embark on sabotage. The Norwegians did not know when sabotage would begin and, given the operational autonomy of *MK*, it is unlikely that even Luthuli knew.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 338.

¹⁸⁹ That Mandela, the one who contested Luthuli's "influence" and "voice" concerning non-violence by forming and launching *MK*, later won the Nobel Peace Prize is a very interesting historical irony.

¹⁹⁰ Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 209.

In an 11 June 2007 e-mail correspondence to me, Allen provided the source of this information. "The source for the piece you quote was Anne Ragnhild Breiby, a Norwegian researcher who did a Master's degree on the award of the Peace Prize to South Africans...[In an interview,] I questioned her in some detail on this point, and it is quite clear that while in Oslo, Luthuli told at least one of his hosts about the decision to turn to violence. The one further detail of interest was that friends in Oslo at the time of the

At the conclusion of Jahn's speech, Luthuli walked to the podium, received a scroll, bowed to the King and gave it to Nokukhanya. Luthuli accepted the Prize in, for him, uncharacteristic attire.¹⁹¹ Luthuli borrowed from Buthelezi the partial regalia of a Zulu warrior king, complete with leopard skin and claw necklace. By wearing the regalia, Luthuli risked disapproval by some within the ANC and his Congregationalist church.¹⁹² Luthuli was not a traditional hereditary chief, he was an *Amakholwa* chief. Some who disapproved mistakenly interpreted the wearing traditional attire as nostalgia for 'heathenism' or as a display of Zulu nationalism. For others, such as Tambo and other ANC leaders, the *Amakhosi* were government minions, stooges and vestiges of the past manipulated by the government to stunt the development of Blacks. Luthuli's choice of apparel is perplexing given that he also ascribed to the pejorative judgements of traditional leadership held by the modern Africanists, nationalists and Christians.¹⁹³ Luthuli did not wear the adornments of an African king so as to represent Zulu nationalism or traditional leadership. Rather, he wore the regalia of an African leader so as to represent the continent of Africa in front of the world press. Luthuli recognised that as the leader of the longest existing and largest liberation movement in Africa, he represented the aspirations of the emerging African continent.

Luthuli delivered a short fifteen minute acceptance speech.¹⁹⁴ Being such an august figure, many do not realise Luthuli's humble and delightful sense of humour. At one point, Luthuli reminded the audience that the South African government did not feel that he was worthy of such an esteemed honour. He then mentioned the award "has even managed [for the first time in history] to produce an issue on which I agree with the government".¹⁹⁵ The primarily Norwegian audience, despite knowing English only as a

award found Luthuli very depressed – presumably because of the tensions he felt over the decision and his receipt of the prize".

¹⁹¹ Only once before, at one of his daughter's (Hilda) wedding, had Luthuli been photographed carrying 'traditional' accoutrements, but in a suit.

¹⁹² Informal discussions with the family suggest that Nokukhanya attempted to dissuade Luthuli from the perplexing decision to wear the regalia.

¹⁹³ Chapter two mentions Luthuli's perspectives on Christianity and traditional chieftainship.

¹⁹⁴ A distinction exists between the short acceptance speech (10 December) and the longer and more prominent Nobel lecture delivered the following day.

¹⁹⁵ *Daily News*, "Severe Criticism of S. A. Race Policy: Lutuli, in Warrior's Robes, Acclaimed in Oslo", 11 December 1961.

second or third language, burst out in laughter. Reuling narrated that press reports may have captured Luthuli's words, but they could not adequately report...

...the impression he created, the feeling of warmth that he gave out, the feeling of sympathy that he engendered in his audience and the prolonged and enthusiastic applause at the end.¹⁹⁶

That same evening Reuling attended a very private and formal dinner at which Luthuli was also present. Luthuli's remarks during a brief speech focused upon the importance of Africa to the world today, the need of arriving at peaceful solutions, his own ideals and his determination to avoid violence.¹⁹⁷

Reuling described how the next day it was others' observation of his private conversation with Luthuli, and thus of his fluency in *Isizulu*, that allowed him the privilege of being the only guest to observe a British Broadcasting Corporation interview with Luthuli for the programme *Panorama*. In this prominent current affairs programme, the television host asked Luthuli, "How long the people would respond to Mr. Luthuli's 'bible-punching' appeal or whether they would fall prey to the 'rabble-rousers'". Luthuli responded that *despite* the fact that the National Party government exhibited no intention to ease its Apartheid policies thus far...

...militant non-violence in South Africa was still a valid weapon that could be most effective and that it was better than resorting to violence to gain one's freedom.¹⁹⁸

In the course of that interview Luthuli again reiterated his refrain:

We feel that to engage in any other method might bring bloodshed. To gain freedom without bloodshed is a much better way.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ LM, correspondence from John Reuling to "Family and Friends", 12 December 1961, 4.

¹⁹⁷ LM, correspondence from John Reuling to "Family and Friends", 12 December 1961, 5.

¹⁹⁸ *Daily News*, "Lutuli featured in BBC TV Programme", 12 December 1961.

¹⁹⁹ BBC's current affairs program, *Panorama*. Cited in: Publication unknown, "Help from the World Welcomed", 12 December 1961.

Though Luthuli's statements were moderate, Reuling admired the frank and courageous manner in which he firmly critiqued the South African government. Reuling surmised that Luthuli...

...went far beyond the bounds of what they had permitted him to do, and there is every possibility that he may suffer for it upon return.²⁰⁰

On Monday, 11 December 1961 Luthuli, despite all the harassment and complications arising from the government's cantankerous response to his award, delivered a seventy minute Nobel lecture and continued to emphasise the movement's non-violent methods. Dressed this time in a western European suit, Luthuli stated:

Through all this cruel treatment in the name of law and order, our people, with few exceptions, have remained non-violent. If today this (Nobel) peace award is given to South Africa through a black man, it is not because we in South Africa have won our fight for peace and human brotherhood. Far from it. Perhaps we stand farther away from victory than any other people in Africa. But nothing we have suffered at the hands of the government has turned us from our chosen path of disciplined resistance. It is for this, I believe, that this award is given.²⁰¹

Luthuli devoted the first twenty minutes "to a picture of the African continent in a state of [relative] peaceful revolution".²⁰² The remaining fifty minutes Luthuli criticised Apartheid for being "a museum piece, a relic of an age which everywhere else is dead or dying".²⁰³

In Norway, Luthuli played the role of a pacifist, though he was not one. Contrary to *Sechaba's* claim that once the ANC decided to opt for military methods, "Luthuli did not waver", he pleaded that there be no decision to launch the new organisation. Luthuli stated on the occasion of receiving the Nobel Peace Prize:

²⁰⁰ LM, correspondence from John Reuling to "Family and Friends", 12 December 1961, 6.

²⁰¹ Publication unknown, "Way of Violence Still Rejected", 12 December 1961. Quoted from Luthuli's Nobel Peace Prize speech found in:

Asmal, Chidester and James, *South Africa's Nobel Laureates*, 28-9.

Publication unknown, "S. A. is 'Museum-Piece of Our Time': Lutuli Surveys Africa Changes", 11 December 1961.

²⁰² When compared with Europe's bloody revolutions.

Daily News, "Lutuli Sings, Brings Crowd to Its Feet", 12 December 1961.

²⁰³ *Daily News*, "Lutuli Sings, Brings Crowd to Its Feet", 12 December 1961.

I firmly believe in non-violence. It is the only correct form which our work and our struggle can take in South Africa. Both from the moral and the practical point of view the situation of the country demands it. Violence disrupts human life and is destructive to perpetrator and victim alike...To refrain from violence is the sign of the civilised man..."²⁰⁴

At this time, Luthuli was not just preaching non-violence to western audiences in Norway. Luthuli also issued a statement for domestic consumption that reiterated the same. For example, on 11 December the Durban branch of the United Nations Association met to commemorate Human Right Day. In his message to the Association, Luthuli reiterated:

I am a firm believer in non-violent action, and I hope to see the liberation of my people and all oppressed people of Africa accomplished by non-violent means.²⁰⁵

It is hard to fathom that those in *MK*'s newly formed leadership structures did not pay close attention to the audio and print news which at the time was saturated with press releases and editorials on Luthuli. Despite the ambiguities, the NEC and CJE agreed in July that the armed movement would fall under the political guidance of the ANC. One would imagine, given the very limited means of communication and coordination, every word uttered from Luthuli would be gleaned and parsed to discern its message. Luthuli still officially led the liberation movement as the President-General of the ANC. For example, it is inconceivable that Mandela would not have known about Luthuli's blunt statement regarding the way forward reported by the domestic paper *Rand Daily Mail*. In his statement, Luthuli implied a stern directive: to be responsible and desist from initiating violence. Luthuli further accused that any one who does advocate violence is irresponsible.

Even for purely practical reasons non-violence is the only course we can follow. Direct attack by an unarmed public against the fully armed forces

²⁰⁴ Colin and Margaret Legum, *The Bitter Choice: Eight South Africans' Resistance to Tyranny* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1968), 62.

²⁰⁵ *Daily News*, "Message from Lutuli", 13 December 1961.

of the government would mean suicide. *There are no responsible persons among us in the African National Congress who advocate violence as a means of furthering our cause* (my emphasis).²⁰⁶

The announcement that Luthuli won the Peace Prize caused some within in the NEC and CJE some embarrassment as they had already made the decision to form *MK* and were instituting plans that prepared for armed conflict. A November 1961 Congress[es] Bulletin issued by the National Consultative Committee defensively qualified the meaning of Luthuli's award:

We care not a rap for those [Africanists] who throw mud by sneering at this award because it is a "Peace" award. Of course we stand for peace!...But let it not be misunderstood. Peace for us, is not peace in bondage...Let the world, and our government, therefore know: our oppressors are turning to the most savage repression in order to safeguard their miserable privileges and to prevent the people stretching out their hands for the fruits of our modern age. This we can no longer tolerate, and we will summon all our brain and brawn...²⁰⁷

If not embarrassed by the award, then many in the ANC were ignorant of its significance. Whereas Luthuli viewed the award as a public relations weapon against the National Party regime, others undervalued it. In a 1995 interview, Sisulu confided:

Now, on the question of Chief Luthuli: We had not, I must confess, by that time attached such an importance to the Nobel Prize itself. But from that time on we began to analyse it and realise its significance.²⁰⁸

Mandela and others such as Sisulu did not wait to analyse the Prize's impact. *MK*'s launch immediately following Luthuli's return from Oslo significantly diminished its significance.

Luthuli's last public event in Oslo was a religious and personal farewell gathering at the Oslo cathedral hosted by the Bishop of Stavanger, S. Birkeli.²⁰⁹ Luthuli did not shy

²⁰⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, "100 Brave Cold to Greet Luthuli", 12 December 1961.

²⁰⁷ UWC, RIMA, Congress of Democrats (MCH 229), "Congress Bulletin" issued by the National Consultative Committee of the SA Indian Congress, SA Coloured Peoples Congress, SA Congress of Democrats and the SA Congress of Trade Unions, November 1961, 6.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Walter Sisulu, 15 September 1995. Found in: Sellström, *Liberation in Southern Africa-Regional and Swedish Voices*, 190.

from confronting his ecclesiastical soul-mates with constructive criticism. While Luthuli was a product of Christian evangelisation and hence deeply respected and participated in the Christian mission, the cultural imperialism that accompanied it did not escape his reproach. Though Luthuli admired and emulated many aspects of western civilisation, he opposed western philosophical efforts to denigrate African culture. In the Oslo cathedral, he attacked Rousseau's concept of the 'Nobel Savage' as insulting, derogatory and abhorrent. Having first hand knowledge of Norwegian missions in Natal as close as thirty kilometres from Groutville in Maphumulo, Luthuli commented specifically on their mission's record. The Norwegian Lutherans had good reason to be proud. Nonetheless, Luthuli soberly criticised the mission for having not aggressively enough established schools and universities and did not ordain indigenous clergy into the ministry in sufficient time. Luthuli then comforted his audience by commending them for recent corrective measures.

During Luthuli's visit, Reuling learned that only a Norwegian could appreciate the impact an African Christian from the southern hemisphere had on an increasingly secularised Nordic country. A bishop of the Church of Norway commented to Reuling particularly on the words that a Norwegian Socialist leader who spoke to Luthuli, asking that God go with him and his wife as they travel to South Africa to fight the struggle.

It was stressed to me that I simply couldn't understand this, not knowing that the Socialists were of a somewhat different cast than those we think of in Britain, that this particular man had to the knowledge of the bishop not mentioned the name of God for years and years and that what he said was not an accident or just a way of speaking because this man had discussed the matter in these terms with the bishop previously. There was a general feeling that his had done much to help a real spiritual revival in a large section of Norwegian people.²¹⁰

On 14 December, Luthuli issued a press statement that affirmed his non-violent stance saying:

²⁰⁹ *Daily News*, "'World of Prayer Follows You', Lutuli Is Told", 14 December 1961.

²¹⁰ LM, correspondence from John Reuling to "Family and Friends", 12 December 1961, 6.

In carrying with me back to South Africa the heavy responsibility inherent in the acceptance of the award, I am strengthened by the knowledge that our belief in the peaceful solution of human problems is shared by millions throughout the world.²¹¹

This statement and dozens of others clearly brought to view the unsustainable position Luthuli had on 14 December and the deeply embarrassing predicament the launch of *MK* only two days later imposed upon him.

The Luthulis departed Oslo on 14 December for Johannesburg via Hamburg, Zurich, Athens and Khartoum on Scandinavian Airlines. The plane was expected to arrive at 14:15 on 15 December, but a two hour delay in Khartoum caused their late arrival in Johannesburg.²¹² From Johannesburg, the Luthulis took another flight at 18:00 that same day to Durban arriving at 19:15. Mahomed was there at the airport waiting to fetch them for their return to Groutville.

Umkhonto we Sizwe's Launch

On 16 December 1961, a series of explosions around the country dramatically announced the new violent phase of the liberation movement. *MK's* published manifesto accompanied the explosions wherein, in retort to Luthuli, presumably Mandela declared:

The government has interpreted the peacefulness of the movement as weakness; the people's non-violent policies have been taken as a green light for government violence. Refusal to resort to violence has been interpreted by the government as an invitation to use armed force against the people without any fear of reprisals.²¹³

The first day's violence initiated by *MK* resulted in the death of one of its own, two aborted arsons and a blown-up manhole containing telephone cables.²¹⁴ Petrus Molefe was killed in the vicinity of his target by a premature explosion. His partner in the failed

²¹¹ UFH, HPAL, ANC, A2561, Box 70, Folder C 3.9, press statement issued by Albert J. Luthuli, 14 December 1961, 1.

²¹² *Evening Post*, "Lutuli Composes His World Speech in Solitude", 02 December 1961.

²¹³ Feinberg and Odendaal, *Nelson Mandela*, 123.

²¹⁴ Due to an 'operational' anomaly, the first act of sabotage was committed in Durban a day early on 15 December 1961.

act, Benjamin Ramotse, sustained burns on his hands and face. Ramotse's hospitalisation later led to his arrest as experts linked residue on his clothes to the explosion.²¹⁵ Slovo narrated his aborted attempt to burn down the Johannesburg Drill Hall because the chairs and wooden floor meant to catch on fire from a homemade incendiary device were being cleaned by workers.²¹⁶ His next target of administrative offices was spared because an official unknowingly caught him in the act of attempting to burn them down.²¹⁷ Turok unsuccessfully tried to set alight the Native Divorce Court located in a Durban post office. Disappointingly, Turok placed the incendiary device in a drawer that he then closed, asphyxiating the fuse. The police found the device intact, with fingerprints linking it to Turok thus leading to his arrest and imprisonment.²¹⁸ Jack Hodgson and Rusty Bernstein succeeded in the destruction of some telecommunication cables.

Eric Mtshali related how he and Bruno Mtolo (later to be state witness "Mr. X" who incriminated many in the Rivonia Trial), Billy Nair, Curnick Ndlovu and Ronnie Kasrils, all members of *MK* Natal Regional Command, suffered the same anticlimactic operations that characterised most of the inaugural sabotage efforts.²¹⁹ On Ordinance Road, Mtshali and others planted a bomb at a door at the Durban pass office. Due to either sabotage within their ranks or to inexperience, "the bomb did not explode properly and caused very little damage".²²⁰ Though on their second operation they succeeded in felling a pylon, the team concluded that both operations were "then not what we wanted them to be".²²¹

Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, a founding member of *MK* in the Natal Regional Command narrated how his small unit had stolen a great deal of dynamite. In doing so,

²¹⁵ UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn* (Journal of Umkhonto we Sizwe), "The Happiest Moment in My Life", by Joe Modise, 11-2.

²¹⁶ To avoid any concerns that this study unfairly reflects pejoratively upon the ANC or its decision to adopt the armed struggle, only narratives sanctioned and published by the ANC are quoted.

²¹⁷ UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "The Longest Three Minutes in My Life: An Episode by Comrade Joe Slovo, Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe", by Joe Slovo, 7.

²¹⁸ Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 155.

²¹⁹ The members of the Natal branch of *MK* consisted of: Curnick Ndlovu (Captain), Billy Nair (Deputy Captain), Ronnie Kasrils (Lieutenant), Eric Mtshali (Sergeant), Brain Chaitow (Head of Technicians), Bruno Mtolo (Assistant Head of Technicians). Harold Strachan instructed the group in methods of sabotage. The government also arrested and imprisoned Strachan for three years soon after the launch of *MK*. Reinertsen neglected to mention Ebrahim.

Reinertsen, "Umkhonto we Sizwe", 24.

²²⁰ UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "December Sixteen, '61 in Durban", Eric Mtshali, 13.

²²¹ UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "December Sixteen, '61 in Durban", Eric Mtshali, 13.

they threw away the blasting caps, not knowing what they were. Ebrahim later carried out relatively successful operations that knocked out power in much of Durban and delayed trains after impairing lines with explosives. Yet, Ebrahim also told of an unsuccessful pipe-bomb attack that caused no damage at all to the targeted telephone cables. In other unsuccessful operations, thick canvas covering goods trains proved impervious to petrol bombs hurled from above.²²²

In a narrative entitled "How MK Grew", Bobby Pillay explained how he, David Perulam (later turned state witness), Ebrahim and a fourth unnamed 'comrade' planned to assassinate an informant named A. S. Kadjee. The first attempt using a fire-bomb was aborted due to their being spotted by a guard. Their fast footwork in retreat was all that allowed them to escape. Following this failure, they intended to burn down the municipal bus depot. They aborted this mission due to the presence of guards. Next they decided to bomb a train. Somehow, they placed a bomb underneath an old black man. "Thanks (sic) God it did not go off", Pillay wrote relieved. Apparently, one of the saboteurs improperly constructed the timing device. Pillay acknowledged in his narrative that his team acted against instructions not to cause loss of life. A second operation to blow-up the Kadjee business proved more successful when the premises suffered severe damage. Another operation destroyed three tracks and a signal box below the Victoria Bridge. Pillay's last operation failed to destroy an electric pole with a pipe-bomb.

The charge did not go off and the following morning when I passed the place I could still see the charge attached to the pole.²²³

As reviewed in chapter three, the media immediately published reports of the sabotage efforts and Luthuli sensed *MK*'s involvement. Upon learning of the attacks Luthuli "demanded an explanation of what was going on".²²⁴ The news of the loss of life and the amateurishness of the acts made Luthuli fume. When Luthuli met with Kotane, he "made it clear that he was not able to tell any member of the ANC to resort to

²²² UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "Though We Had No AK47s Nor Revolvers", Ebrahim Ismail, 14-5.

²²³ UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "How MK Grew", by Bobby Pillay, 20.

²²⁴ Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 268.

violence, but neither was he prepared to condemn it".²²⁵ The violence saddened Luthuli. Yet, he was helpless to do anything about it. Luthuli said to Kotane:

When my son decides to sleep with a girl, he does not ask for my permission, but just does it. It is only afterwards, when the girl is pregnant and the parents make a case, that he brings his troubles home.²²⁶

Umkhonto we Sizwe's Post-Mortem

The purpose of reviewing the initial failures of *MK* is not to denigrate or dishonour those who sacrificed their lives for South Africa's liberation. Yet, even *MK* veterans acknowledged that turn to violence was disastrous for the movement. The ANC's own published narratives demonstrate that the initiation of violence was ill-conceived, inept, haphazard and ultimately a fast-track strategy to derailing the liberation movement in the short and medium-term.²²⁷ The first *MK* operatives were untrained, ill-equipped and naïve as to the implications of their actions and the aggressive manner in which the National Party government would respond with repressive legislation (90 Day Detention law) and extra-legal means (torture) to extract information from operatives.²²⁸ Steve Tshwete recollected how the regime tortured one operative and how it understood the significance of the ANC's leadership change from Luthuli to Mandela.

The police knew it too. I remember an instance when one cadre was told by one of the most famous torturers: "Look here! I used to understand the old Congress of Luthuli, not this thing of Mandela. This is not an organisation but a bloody f[ucking] army. You are therefore a soldier and I am going to *bliksem* you like is done to a captured soldier".²²⁹

The regime correspondingly changed its tactics. The liberation movement's inability to carry out effective sabotage and the degree that such violence would antagonise the state

²²⁵ Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 268-9.

²²⁶ Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 269.

²²⁷ It is true that, for the long-term, *MK* kept the militant embers of liberation alive psychologically. However, it can also be argued that the turn to violence and the solidarity with Communist countries postponed western governments' belated and eventual anti-Apartheid stance.

²²⁸ Albie Sachs, *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs*, rev. ed. (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1990), 282-5.

²²⁹ UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "MK Is Born", by Steve Tshwete, 26.

caused Luthuli and Kotane to predict that it would not be an effective means by which to prosecute the struggle for liberation and argue against it before *MK*'s formation and initiation. Kotane gauged the initiation of violence to have "ruined the movement". After the initiation of violence, Kotane chastised Turok:

What the hell's wrong with you, why did you do stupid things like this?...
If you throw stones at peoples' windows they're going to come out and
break your neck, so don't do it unless you know what you are doing.²³⁰

In his autobiography, Slovo confided that the plans for violence were "utterly unreal", calling the initiation of violence "at best, an heroic failure" that left the liberation movement "abysmally weak in the years that followed".²³¹ Slovo confided similar sentiments in *MK*'s 25th Anniversary publication:

There were a number of factors which influenced the rather inexperienced approaches to aspects of what we had to do. First of all an important factor was our misassessment of the situation (sic)... We did not sufficiently realise that the beginnings of armed struggle would lead to the very steps which the enemy took.²³²

Luthuli's plan using militant non-violent strategies (economic sanctions, international diplomacy and mass civil disobedience) would preserve the leadership of the liberation movement and advance the cause of liberation more effectively than sabotage and guerrilla warfare. The inexperience and ineffectiveness of *MK*'s assaults very quickly led to the incarceration of most of the ANC's leadership, including Mandela, thus decapitating the movement. Slovo himself soberly confessed:

It is also a matter of historic record that Rivonia occurred and in the few years following Rivonia all the heroic efforts made by the movement to reconstitute in the underground failed. And for all practical purposes the internal movement as an organised structure had been destroyed.²³³

²³⁰ UWC, RIMA, MCH 07, 8.4.5, tape 2, interview with Ben Turok, August - October 1973, 7-8.

²³¹ Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 146.

²³² UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "The Sabotage Campaign", by Joe Slovo, 25.

²³³ UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "The Sabotage Campaign", by Joe Slovo, 24.

The narratives of those who initiated armed conflict on 16 December 1961 bear testimony to the short and medium term failure of the armed struggle, the bravery of those who initiated it and the moral legitimacy of the cause (Luthuli's "brave just men") notwithstanding. Narratives by Albie Sachs and Ronnie Kasrils highlighted the arrests, detentions, executions and betrayals of many *MK* cadres in the opening months and years of armed conflict: (Denis Goldberg, Nelson Mandela, Curnick Ndlovu, Billy Nair, George Naicker, Eleanor Anderson and Bruno Mtolo).²³⁴ *MK* cadres also recalled the arrests of Vuyisile Mini, Wilson Khayingo and Zinakile Mkhaba.²³⁵ With most if not all of the ANC leadership in jail or in exile, there was no one left to whom Luthuli could advocate militant non-violent strategies, and no one to carry out its laborious administration.

Luthuli's ban is often blamed for limiting his leadership. The *MK* cadres' narratives reflect that it was not primarily Luthuli's banning that limited his leadership (he still assisted in the organisation of the Pietermaritzburg Conference and still met clandestinely with many ANC officials and Kotane). Two other circumstances primarily amputated Luthuli's leadership. First, the sudden imprisonment and exile of most of the other leaders of the movement limited Luthuli's pool of human resources and thus his capacity to lead. Second, the ANC's ideological and thus strategic policy changes required a different 'command and control' mould of leadership and thus Luthuli's marginalisation. Though Luthuli's influence waned since Sharpeville, the initiation of violence made certain that the levers of leadership fell from his hands. The non-violent movement had ended. More important than revealing the non-efficacy of the initial strikes is the absence of any documentation of Luthuli's leadership at the time: the silence.

Narratives recounted by those involved in the launch of violence within *MK* commemorative publications reveal a silence through their failure to state whether Luthuli participated in or assented to the initiation of violence.²³⁶ The silences in the

²³⁴ UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "The Least Dramatic Contribution", by Albie Sachs, and "Dynamite Thieves", by Ronnie Kasrils, 16 and 17, respectively.

²³⁵ UWC, RIMA, MCH 150, *Dawn*, "Vuyisile Mini", by R. M. T. Ngqungwana, 19.

²³⁶ Scott Couper, "'An Embarrassment to the Congresses?': The Silencing of Chief Albert Luthuli and the Production of ANC History", in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 2, June 2009, 331-48.

narratives, especially from operatives in Kwazulu-Natal, reveal that Luthuli was not involved, directly or indirectly, in the strategic implementation of violence.²³⁷ Within the above cited narratives, none of the *MK* cadres ever mentioned receiving instructions, advice, counsel, affirmation or support from Luthuli, privately or publicly. No one mentioned Luthuli. Not even those cadres based in what is now Kwazulu-Natal expressed a single sentiment about or reveal a single instruction from Luthuli. The reason for this is clear: all of the Natal *MK* members belonged to the Communist Party and only one, Ndlovu, was also a member of the ANC. Mtolo's book, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The Road to the Left* revealed a great deal of contestation between the ANC and the Communist Party in Natal. Mtolo concluded that "after the sabotage attempts it became clear that the local officials of the ANC in our province were not consulted", though *MK* designated Ndlovu to serve as its liaison with ANC.²³⁸ As "Mr. X" and as an author, Mtolo is a problematic source. By providing testimony and writing a book, Mtolo intended to reflect negatively on the ANC to the state's benefit.²³⁹ Nonetheless, there is little reason to suspect that sharp disagreement did not exist between many within the ANC and the Communist Party over the use of violence as this does not necessarily reflect poorly on the ANC from the state's perspective.²⁴⁰ Mtolo's book asserted that *MK* did not involve the ANC in its formation or plans for launch, and purposefully so.

In her study, Reinertsen also identified this silence saying "History is more richly textured if its pages can bring to life some of the silent moments surrounding high points of activity. These silences are very often full of conflicts, dissension and procrastination of real human beings..."

Reinertsen, "Umkhonto we Sizwe", 2.

²³⁷ Reinertsen correctly indicated that "After the intensive activity of the first few years, the pages of history are remarkably barren. This is partly because of the scarcity and/or unavailability [of] documentation on the activities of the banned African National Congress". Reinertsen characterised the documentation of the months between July and December 1961 as "shrouded in obscurity".

Reinertsen, "Umkhonto we Sizwe", 1 and 24, respectively.

Though the ANC is no longer banned, there are few archival records documenting the ANC's turn to violence. Incredibly, no archival source can provide the exact dates of two all night meetings, held by the ANC NEC and the Joint Congresses. Only a vague "July" from SADET and Lodge can be cited as the date for these meetings.

²³⁸ Bruno Mtolo, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The Road to the Left* (Durban: Drakensberg, 1966), 23.

²³⁹ Mtolo's concluding chapter (XXV) entitled, "Lalela, Chief Luthuli!" is absurd. The chapter is a personal appeal to Luthuli to accept the bantustan framework. I suspect that Mtolo did not even write it; or, if he did, the state compelled him to do so. For example, Mtolo contradicted the contents of his book when he states, "Remember, Chief, that the police could have acted against you at the time of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Those things were done in your name. We were the 'military wing' of the ANC, and the Head Committee members were careful to obtain your approval for their actions" (191).

²⁴⁰ Mtolo also disclosed that this division existed within the Communist Party.

The South African Communist Party expelled Rowley Arenstein for his anti-violent stance.

We were all convinced Communists who would have nothing to do with the ANC unless it was prepared to toe the Communist line... We even managed to get recruits for military training overseas without approaching the ANC... [SACTU members] were also told that it was time that they should know their true leaders who were prepared to fight to the bitter end, and had to realise that leaders who were against Umkhonto we Sizwe were leading them nowhere... We could not trust some of the people who made up the ANC leadership. We could not let the dangerous underground movement be controlled by the leaders of a mass organisation which included people who had different views from us as far as sabotage was concerned... Curnick told us that Walter [Sisulu] had given him strict instructions that we were not to give in to the ANC under whatever pressure.²⁴¹

Some of those within the ANC, some Communists such as Rowley Arenstein and some from the Indian Congress applied three points of pressure on *MK*. First, as seen in the July NEC and CJE meetings, most members of the Natal ANC opposed the use of violence and like Luthuli still actively opposed it. Second, the ANC wished to know who in the ANC also served *MK*. Third, the ANC wished to authorise approval for any violent action. *MK* would not compromise on any of these three pressures. *MK* believed it possessed operational autonomy from the ANC. The ANC believed it had political suzerainty over *MK*. *MK* considered its tactics, membership and launch to be operational considerations whereas the ANC considered them to be political. A clash proved inevitable as ANC leaders voiced their suspicions of *MK* being “an organisation which was led by irresponsible people”.²⁴²

MK’s newly formed hierarchy, composed of a High Command led by Mandela and regional commands, ignored Luthuli’s leadership in the months following the announcement of the Peace Prize; the 16 December bombings were, at best, reckless, and, at worst, insubordinate. The December bombings (and more specifically their timing) exceeded the High Command’s mandate to only constitute an organisation (not

Kwamuhle Museum, File number 5 4 5 6 1 7, Accession number 99/3697 – 3699 – 4200 - 4204, interview with Rowley Arenstein, recording track (11 10 25 12) through (13 12 16 15), date unknown, 12 and 22.

²⁴¹ Mtolo, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, 23, 24, 25 and 26, respectively.

²⁴² Mtolo, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, 26.

activate it), rendered moot the mandate to remain under the political supervision of the ANC and displayed immaturity.

If Luthuli did not agree with the initiation of violence, why did he not specifically denounce *MK* and its tactics? Three reasons stand out. One, Luthuli could not “blame brave just men” for choosing a violent course. That is not to say that he agreed with them. Luthuli sympathised with his lieutenants and blamed the National Party regime. Second, a democratic process within three meetings agreed to form *MK*. In a public denunciation, Luthuli would be unable to differentiate his reluctant yielding to a democratic decision to form *MK* before the Nobel Prize announcement and his opposition to *MK*’s launch and tactics after the Nobel Prize announcement. A denunciation of *MK* and its tactics would only appear hypocritical despite the fact Luthuli did not support the decision to form or know of *MK*’s launch. Third, once Mandela launched *MK*, there was no turning back for the liberation movement. What was done was done. Luthuli believed that refutation of the intractable course chosen could only harm and never contribute to the liberation struggle. Though he never denounced *MK*, Luthuli still advocated non-violent strategies until April 1962.

Disconcerting Conversation

Mandela testified in his autobiography that he visited Luthuli in Grootville before departing for North Africa in January 1962. Mandela mistakenly interpreted Luthuli’s displeasure at this meeting to be caused by Luthuli’s inability to recall two momentous all-night meetings he chaired just five months previous. Again, one must recall the quotation by Kathrada cited at the beginning of this chapter: “...it should be borne in mind that even people involved in the same event remember the details differently, and amnesia is no friend of accuracy”. Yes, Luthuli was angry with Mandela. However, Luthuli’s anger did not arise because he felt he was not involved in or informed about *MK*’s formation. Luthuli presided, and more importantly, remembered being present. Instead, *MK*’s launch without his knowledge, on the heels of the receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize, angered Luthuli.

Following the failed May 1961 strike, Mandela held a press conference with western journalists. In that interview Mandela stated that “In my mind we are closing a chapter on this question of a non-violent policy”. Mandela recalled that he was reprimanded by the NEC for making such a statement public without first consulting with the movement. Luthuli felt that Mandela had again acted unilaterally by issuing the manifesto announcing *MK* on 16 December 1961. Although the manifesto qualified that *MK* utilised violence as a “complement to previous actions” and although it stated that “repression and violence will no longer be met with non-violent resistance only”, the overall tone declared, “We are striking out on a new road for the liberation of the people of this country”. Statements like “closing a chapter” and “striking out along a new road” implied the abandonment of non-violent methods, violating the NEC and CJE meetings’ agreements to continue traditional methods of resistance. By authorising the formation of an armed movement, the NEC and CJE intended to prepare for, at most, a parallel strategy, and more realistically, a secondary strategy. Luthuli warned that the formation of *MK* must not be at the expense of the continuance of political methods. When reflecting from prison in the 1970s on *MK*’s launch, Mandela honestly and transparently disclosed:

We had made exactly that mistake, drained the political organisations of their enthusiastic and experienced men, concentrated our attention on the new organisation.²⁴³

By forming and launching *MK*, the ANC abandoned political work. Having not educated, informed or trained the grassroots for a new form of struggle, the sabotage operations rendered most ANC members spectators.²⁴⁴ The *MK* manifesto contradicted the Joint Congresses’ covenant with *MK* when it stated, “The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight”. Mandela made a political statement that equated Luthuli’s militant non-violent methods with ‘submission’ and violence with ‘fighting’ and declared boldly, “We shall not submit...”²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Nelson Mandela, unpublished autobiographical manuscripts, Department of Correctional Services Files, Nelson Mandela A5, National Archives of South Africa, 1976. Cited by Lodge in citation below.

²⁴⁴ Lodge, *Mandela*, 91 and 238, see endnote 38.

²⁴⁵ Feinberg and Odendaal, *Nelson Mandela*, 122.

Evidence suggests that rather than a complement to the ANC's non-violent strategies, the launch of *MK* intentionally sought to undermine them. Meghraoui of the ANLF suggested the timing of *MK*'s launch aimed to specifically diminish the anesthetising effect the Nobel Prize would have on the South African majority. If one removes Meghraoui's outrageous suggestion that Luthuli intentionally returned to South Africa to launch *MK*, the proffered explanation of Mandela's motivation to launch *MK* so quickly on the heels of Luthuli's honour is accurate.²⁴⁶

At the same time the ANC leadership with Luthuli at its head, was not unmindful of the fact that the idea of the Nobel Prize could be used to pacify the African people in South Africa. To them it became important to show the world that no respectable amount of respectable titles could stop the struggle of the African people. Thus Luthuli returned to South Africa on the 15th [of] December 1961 to launch a new phase of the struggle lead by Umkonto We Sizwe the following morning (sic). The entire country was shaken by a series of bomb explosions.²⁴⁷

Benson and the manifesto point to the central problem that is *not* Luthuli's marginalisation from the decision to form *MK*, but rather the unilateral political statements that accompanied the premature commencement of the new organisation's methods. Benson astutely wrote:

Then Luthuli raised the question that had long troubled him: *Umkhonto*'s announcement in December 1961 that the policy of non-violence had ended. Aware of Mandela's role, Luthuli criticised the failure to consult with himself and the ANC 'grassroots'. He felt they had been compromised.²⁴⁸

The manifesto stated that "*Umkhonto we Sizwe* fully supports the national liberation movement and our members, jointly and individually, place themselves under the overall political guidance of that movement".²⁴⁹ Though the new organisation would be separate

²⁴⁶ Luthuli actually tried to extend his stay so that he could travel to Sweden. The South African government refused the request, forcing Luthuli to return on the designated day.

²⁴⁷ UFH, HPAL, ANC, ANCLL, Box 23, Folder 4, draft article by Meghraoui, 31 August 1967, 3.

²⁴⁸ Benson, *Nelson Mandela*, 116.

²⁴⁹ "Umkhonto we Sizwe Manifesto", 1961. Found in: Feinberg and Odendaal, *Nelson Mandela*, 122.

from the ANC, “it would nevertheless be linked to it and come under its formal control”.²⁵⁰ Yengwa stated the same.²⁵¹ While it is true that due to the political climate the precise relationship between the ANC and the armed movement was nebulous and often characterised oxymoronically, Luthuli felt that the 16 December implementation of the new methods and the rationale for justifying it were intrinsically political rather than operational. Because no one consulted Luthuli about the planning, impending occurrence and the timing of the December bombings, Mandela violated the spirit, if not the ‘letter’, of the CJE meeting’s compromise. Sisulu related, “At a meeting to review the launch of *MK*, Chief Luthuli was clearly embarrassed about the timing and unhappy about the apparent recklessness that led to the casualties”.²⁵²

The entire manifesto essentially indicted and rebuked the ‘former’ non-violent strategies, not only viewing them as obsolete, but as fuelling continuing oppression. Mandela stated, “The government has interpreted the peacefulness of the movement as weakness; the people’s non-violent policies as a green light for government violence”.²⁵³ The bombings and the views expressed in the manifesto leaflets, and not Luthuli’s failing memory, explain his rebuke. Mandela was willing to be the ‘tail that wags the dog’ as he did previously during the interview with foreign journalists following the May 1961 strike. Mandela stated in his autobiography, “...sometimes one must go public with an idea to push a reluctant organisation in the direction you want it to go”.²⁵⁴ This Mandela did, not just in word, but also in deed. Luthuli was helpless to stop it.

Conclusion

Hammar skjöld’s disappointing January visit, the increased balkanisation of the liberation movement prior to the March All-In Africa Conference and Mandela’s ascendancy as the de facto leader of the ANC diminished the potency of Luthuli’s non-violent advocacy. Since Sharpeville, Luthuli’s influence as President-General continued

²⁵⁰ Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, 281.

²⁵¹ LM, Yengwa, MYP, unpublished draft autobiographical manuscript, 106.

²⁵² Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 147.

²⁵³ Sisulu, *Walter & Albertina Sisulu*, 123.

²⁵⁴ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 320.

to wane while Mandela's waxed. In July, Luthuli participated in and yielded to the NEC and CJE decisions to form *MK*. Nonetheless, the decision did not authorise *MK* to embark upon violence. A decision to 'form' is not necessarily a decision to 'implement'. 'Fatigue' partially explains why Luthuli yielded to the decision. After Luthuli chaired two exhausting all night meetings, the younger more energetic firebrands out-voted him, causing his democratic capitulation. To further distance himself and the ANC from the decision, Luthuli proposed a compromise that deemed *MK* a separate but linked organisation so that though politically subservient to the ANC, *MK* did not officially 'dirty' the ANC and Luthuli's hands.

From October 1961 Luthuli vociferously spoke out against the use of violence because the Nobel Committee dramatically altered the political environment by awarding him the Peace Prize. More than modesty caused Luthuli to repeatedly emphasise that the award was not an award for him personally, but an award for the ANC that he led and for the liberation struggle in general. To ANC members, Luthuli emphasised in all his press interviews that the award recognised the non-violent struggle. For Luthuli, the Peace Prize suddenly rendered Mandela's claims articulated at the NWC, NEC and the CJE meetings and the future claim in his February 1962 speech in Addis Ababa to the Pan African Freedom Conference that "all opportunities for peaceful agitation and struggle have been closed to us" no longer accurate in describing the struggle's political context. The international community provided the non-violent movement a whirlwind of publicity and sympathy. The tactics that enabled Gandhi to conquer the British Empire by appealing to conscience and to universal standards of human rights and the profiting from the international community's ability to 'shame' an oppressor to reform began to come to fruition in the South African struggle.

Luthuli feared a possible impending decision to launch *MK* and argued against the use of violence, attempting to forestall the move from one decision to the other until the full benefits of the awarding of the Prize could be learned and utilised. The ANC and Joint Congresses based its decision to allow *MK*'s formation on Mandela's enthusiastic and Luthuli's reluctant realisation that non-violent tactics had reached a cul-de-sac. But, the Peace Prize unveiled new hope, new opportunities and an extension of the road. Surely, the other members of the ANC, despite their inability to meet and collectively

reassess tactics in response to the dramatically changed situation, would come to the same conclusion and, at a bare minimum, place any discussion of *MK*'s launch of violent action in abeyance. In his many press statements, Luthuli emphasised non-violent tactics, warned of the suicidal nature of violent resistance and repeated his steadfast avowal that the ANC remain non-violent.

These statements did not constitute treacherous betrayals of a decision collectively made in July to allow for the formation of *MK*. Nor were his statements indications of Luthuli's ill-health, senility or poor memory as Mandela asserted in his autobiography. Luthuli's numerous October, November and December press statements and speeches highlight the fact that he, as a prerogative of leadership, advised against *MK*'s possible launch in light of the October Nobel announcement and the December reception of the Peace Prize so as to tactically maximise this non-violent form of opposition and hence gain the sympathy of the world. It was logistically infeasible and risky to convene NWC, NEC and CJE meetings to re-visit the issue in a democratic forum, let alone consult the grassroots. Instead, Luthuli utilised the press to the greatest extent possible to place in abeyance that which he feared: *MK*'s launch. Arguably, Luthuli implied that he questioned the decision to form *MK* in the press. Unarguably, Luthuli unequivocally pleaded with his lieutenants through the press: 'Do not do anything stupid *now*!'

Mandela not only was reckless in his failure to understand the strategic implications of the Nobel Peace Prize, but he prematurely implemented new tactics rather than only forming a separate entity that would be prepared to carry out those new tactics when and if appropriate and necessary. More than semantics distinguished the collective decisions to agree to form an entity and the unilateral decision carried out by that entity. More than an implementation of a nuanced interpretation, Mandela's launch of *MK* constituted a significant breach of covenant. This breach angered Luthuli. The NEC and CJE meetings explicitly stated that though separate from the ANC, *MK* was to be subject to its mature, wise and prudent political leadership. The bombings on 16 December not only violated this agreement, but violated it in the most harmful and strategically unwise manner possible – on the heels of the Nobel Peace Prize. In launching *MK*, Mandela did not re-evaluate the changed context and acted autonomously (that is, not under the

political supervision of the ANC) and possibly negated much of the practical benefit that the movement might have derived from the Nobel award. Premature and unnecessary.²⁵⁵ Reckless. Irresponsible. Hot-headed. Insubordinate. These were Mandela's actions in Luthuli's estimation. But, he kept silent. He could do nothing. The damage was done.

Though Luthuli was not a pacifist, he persistently and consistently advocated that only non-violent methods be used in the struggle for liberation after the initiation of violence until at least April 1962.²⁵⁶ Luthuli calculated that resisting the Apartheid regime with violence was tantamount to "national suicide", for in warfare the National Party regime had its strongest advantage.²⁵⁷ Luthuli believed that the initiation of violence with superficial preparation and impatience would prove to be a catastrophic strategic mistake. Luthuli believed, especially after his reception of the Peace Prize, that non-violent means were more effective against the regime despite their seeming ineffectiveness thus far, because in this area the ANC held the moral, political and economic high ground.

Luthuli refused to sanction violence because he hoped for a peaceful non-racial society following liberation. Because, in his mind, liberation was eventually assured, Luthuli concerned himself with the nature of society after the attainment of liberation. Luthuli believed that liberation was hardly worth fighting for if a bloody apocalypse was the means and a divided, resentful, wounded and fractured society was the result. Not until the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) twenty-three years later under the influence of, among many others, two churchmen, Boesak and Tutu (who also advocated only non-violent means but like Luthuli sympathised with and did not condemn those whose desperation led them to believe there to be no other way than violence), did the movement for liberation turn the tide and gain the upper hand against the National Party regime.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Lodge, *Mandela*, 91.

²⁵⁶ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, Albert Luthuli, "Our Way Is Right – We Must Keep On", 25 March 1962.

BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, Albert Luthuli, "No Change in Heart among the Whites", 29 April 1962.

²⁵⁷ Albert Luthuli, "Excerpts from Chief Luthuli's evidence at the [T]reason [T]rial dealing with his understanding of a non-violent liberation struggle". Found in: Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 153-4.

²⁵⁸ The trade union movement and international advocacy organisations must also be given substantive credit for the revival of the liberation movement.

Chapter Six

Luthuli, the Leader, Started Dying Years Ago¹

There are many unanswered prayers. We forget that the answer to prayer may be "No!" because God knows what we should have!

-- transcribed by Albert Luthuli from Rev. Noel Tarrant²

Introduction

This last chapter highlights events from 1962 until Luthuli's death in 1967 that affirm several sub-themes already discussed in previous chapters concerning his opposition to violence. First, Mandela returned to South Africa from his 1962 pan-African tour proposing that the ANC dominate the Congress Alliance thus diverging with Luthuli's South African exceptionalist perspective that emphasised multi- (or non-) racialism and non-violence. Second, the importance of interpreting Luthuli through a theological lens as well as a political lens, is emphasised with an analysis of the title of his autobiography (*Let My People Go*) published in 1962. This includes a brief examination of Moses' role in the ancient Hebrews' liberation. Luthuli's 'typological enactment' leads to a conclusion that he envisioned himself as a spiritual leader who would not see the Promised Land rather than as a successful political or military leader. Third, interviews with Rowley Arenstein and Ronald Harrison contest assertions from *MK* cadres that Luthuli supported the turn to violence and thus refute their production of a homogenised nationalist historical perspective. Fourth, minutes from a March 1962 CJE meeting indicated that those present perceived Luthuli's *Post* columns pleading for non-violence to be embarrassing. Luthuli's subsequent silencing informed Nokwe's 1963 assurance that Luthuli would not condemn violent acts. Yet, Luthuli did not need

¹ Publication Unknown, "Lutuli, the Leader, Started Dying Years Ago", July 1967. Found at LM.

"Albert Lutuli – the man many people would have loved to see as Prime Minister – was crushed to death by a train this week. He could not have died a happy man. Few of his dreams – not for himself but for his people who meant so much to him – were realised during his lifetime".

² Handwritten notes by Luthuli written on Sunday, 08 January 1967 at 11:00 as he listened to a sermon by Rev. W. Noel H. Tarrant at the Rondebosch Congregational Church, Cape Town. UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, Notebooks (dealing with church services and sermons", 1965-1967.

his own movement to silence him. The government's enforcement of the Sabotage Act in June 1962 more effectively smothered any further domestic emphasis on non-violent methods. Political contact with Luthuli became very circumscribed, leading even the ANC to resort to his ecclesiastic contacts to provide information about his wellbeing. Luthuli became so marginalised from the ANC that his 1964 Rivonia Statement revealed he was not aware of the 1962 Lobatse conference's outcome that removed the veil between the ANC and MK.

Internationally, Luthuli could not be silenced. In the final years of Luthuli's life he received a visit from Robert Kennedy who during his 1966 whirlwind trip of South Africa touted many typical American, liberal, Christian and western views that focused on what 'civilisation' meant for Luthuli. Luthuli continued to receive international honours such as being elected Rector of Glasgow University in 1962 and receiving the New York City Protestant Council's Family of Man award in 1964 for his non-violent opposition to Apartheid. Luthuli would not have accepted these honours had he at any time supported MK's launch. This chapter, as previous chapters did with Reuling, Mary-Louise Hooper and Mahomed, highlights Luthuli's cooperation with George Houser, the American Committee on Africa, and Martin Luther King to jointly appeal for non-violent opposition to Apartheid in December 1962. Luthuli's imbrication with pacifists, clerics, liberals and other non-violent human rights advocates was so extensive that testimony in one 1964 trial claimed he offered to resign from the ANC so as to not impede others' prosecution of the armed struggle.

This investigation would not delve into the manner in which Luthuli died if nationalist oriented cadres and historians did not so enthusiastically perpetuate a myth that he was murdered. If Luthuli's health was rapidly failing, if he never advocated violence and if militant leaders of the liberation movement and the Apartheid regime silenced him as this study concludes, then no motive existed for his killing. Therefore, this chapter casts doubt on the assertions documented in chapter three that foul-play resulted in his death. While not attempting to conclusively resolve how and why Luthuli died, this study asserts that, at a minimum, *historians* can not propagate a view that his death was "mysterious" without providing a motive, reasons why the official inquest's

finding is unreliable and any contesting evidence (not suspicions) that suggest he was killed intentionally.

Divergent Objectives

In December 1961, the ANC received an invitation from the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA) to attend a conference to be held in Addis Ababa in February 1962.³ In a 03 January 1962 NEC meeting, the ANC underground and Luthuli insisted that Mandela lead the ANC PAFMECSA delegation.⁴ Given the ANC's need to secure outside political, financial, moral and military support for the new phase of its struggle, it would use the PAFMECSA conference as a means to network throughout the continent and communicate with allies in exile. A whirlwind tour by Mandela of West, North and East Africa would connect the rather insular ANC with the wider continent.

Prior to his departure, Mandela covertly drove to Groutville on 08 January 1962 to liaise with Luthuli.⁵ In his biography on Mandela, Tom Lodge pointed out three discrepancies within Mandela's autobiographical account of this meeting and his January 1962 diary entries. First, Mandela's 08 January diary entry mentioned that "Luthuli was in high spirits" when he met with him.⁶ In and of itself, this does not represent a contradiction with Mandela's autobiographical recollection thirty years later of a "disconcerting" conversation.

A second and more pertinent discrepancy is whether Luthuli approved of the military objective of Mandela's sojourn throughout Africa. In his 1964 Rivonia Trial statement, Mandela indicated that in addition to attending the conference, the purpose of his visit was to...

³ PAFMECSA eventually became the Organisation of African Unity.

⁴ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 342.

Lodge, *Mandela*, 95

⁵ This meeting is reviewed toward the close of chapter five that details the events of 1961 because the disconcerting nature of Mandela and Luthuli's conversation dealt directly with MK's December launch.

⁶ Lodge, *Mandela*, 96 and 239, endnote 53 and 54. Lodge cited:

"Mandela (1962) Diary, entry for 03 January-13 July 1962, Exhibit R 17, Rivonia Trial Records, Brenthurst Library, Johannesburg, entry for 08 January 1962.

...obtain facilities for the training of soldiers, and that I would also solicit scholarships for the higher education of matriculated Africans.⁷

Luthuli may have only been aware of the educational rather than the military purpose of the trip. Arranging “political and economic support for our new military force and, more important, military training for our men in as many places on the continent as possible” may have been the intention of the trip for Mandela, Sisulu and other members of the NEC, but that may not have been articulated to Luthuli on 08 January.⁸ In his 1964 Rivonia statement, Mandela contradicted himself regarding the intended objectives of his trip. First, Mandela stated that prior to his departure the purpose of his trip would include military objectives. However, later Mandela stated that a military objective went against an original ANC decision:

I also made arrangements for our recruits to undergo military training. But [in North Africa] it was impossible to organise any scheme without the co-operation of the ANC offices in Africa. I consequently obtained the permission of the ANC in South Africa to do this. *To this extent then there was a departure from the original decision of the ANC, but it applied outside South Africa only* (my emphasis).⁹

A third discrepancy is that Mandela’s 08 January diary entry neglects to comment upon whether Luthuli agreed or disagreed with the decision to follow a violent course. Perhaps, Mandela did not wish to record Luthuli’s disagreement in his diary. Lodge speculated that Mandela interpolated into his telling of the “disconcerting meeting” later debates about Luthuli’s views.¹⁰ Chapters three and five clarified the cause of Luthuli’s distress in this meeting by asserting that the launch of *MK*, rather than its formation, angered Luthuli. One must recall that Benson’s pre-*Long Walk to Freedom* book (1986) narrated that the same incident occurred *after* Mandela’s return from North Africa,

⁷ FHU, HPAL, ANC, A2561, Box 70, Folder C 39, transcripts of the Rivonia Trial 1963-1964, Mandela’s statement regarding the formation of *MK* on the opening of the defence case in the Pretoria Supreme Court, 20 April 1964, 9.

Feinberg and Odendaal, *Nelson Mandela*, 170.

⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 342.

⁹ FHU, HPAL, ANC, A2561, Box 70, Folder C 3.9, transcripts of the Rivonia Trial 1963-1964, 10. Feinberg and Odendaal, *Nelson Mandela*, 170-1.

¹⁰ Lodge, *Mandela*, 96.

immediately prior to his arrest in Howick. I think this first disconcerting conversation occurred, as Mandela stated, in January after the launch of *MK* and immediately prior to his departure for North Africa.¹¹

Two problems exist with these accounts in Mandela's autobiography. First, Mandela failed to explain how on 03 January Luthuli and the ANC insisted that he exit the country to arrange training, finances and political support for *MK* and then five days later on 08 January chastised him for not being consulted about its formation. Second, Mandela failed to explain how Luthuli eventually arrived at his support of *MK*'s formation after, according to Mandela, forgetting about his participation in its formation and his subsequent anger about being marginalised. Such discrepancies suggest Luthuli did not know of the military objectives for Mandela's trip and that he never supported the turn to violence.

Mandela's autobiography chronicled well his sojourn throughout Africa. On 10 January, Mandela drove to Lobatse, Bechuanaland (Botswana), illegally exiting South Africa. After travelling to Kasane in northern Bechuanaland, Mandela flew to Mbeya, Tanganyika (Tanzania). Proceeding to Dar es Salaam, Mandela met the independent country's first President, Julius Nyerere, who advised him to postpone the armed struggle. Next, Mandela travelled via Khartoum, Sudan to Accra, Ghana, where he met Oliver Tambo for the first time in nearly two years. In February, Mandela travelled to Addis Ababa to attend the PAFMECSA conference. At the conference, Mandela's speech proclaimed the opposite of that which Luthuli and (according to Luthuli in his Rivonia Statement) the ANC believed: "all opportunities for peaceful struggle had been closed to us", hence the need to launch *MK*.¹² If as Benson asserted, Luthuli chastised Mandela after his return from North Africa, Mandela's speech gave Luthuli good reason to be upset. Mandela declared to all of Africa:

A leadership commits a crime against its own people if it hesitates to sharpen its political weapons where they have become less effective...On

¹¹ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 342.

Benson, *Nelson Mandela*, 116.

¹² Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 351.

the night of 16 December last year, the whole of South Africa vibrated under the heavy blows of Umkhonto we Sizwe.¹³

For Luthuli, Mandela's ethical accusation and hyperbole could easily be interpreted as insubordinate and insulting.

Mandela continued to Cairo and Tunis and on to Rabat, Morocco, where the head of the Algerian mission advised Mandela to not neglect the political side of war saying, "International public opinion is sometimes worth more than a fleet of jet fighters".¹⁴ Mandela then travelled to Bamako in Mali, to Guinea and to Sierra Leone where Mandela was mistaken for Luthuli. Next, Mandela journeyed to Liberia, back to Ghana and back to Guinea where he met Sekou Touré. In Dakar, Mandela conversed with President Léopold Senghor and then proceeded to London where he had a disconcerting conversation with Yusuf Dadoo. Dadoo objected to Mandela's view that the ANC must seek to be more pan-Africanist in nature and that within the Congresses movement the ANC (Blacks) "had to appear to be the first among equals".¹⁵ Upon Mandela's return to South Africa, Luthuli expressed to him the same objections that Dadoo did.

Luthuli only yielded to the decision to form *MK*. Mandela did not inform Luthuli of *MK*'s initiation and Luthuli did not support it. Evidence casts doubt upon the extent to which Luthuli was informed about the military objectives of Mandela's North African trip. Therefore, Mandela's comments to Colin Legum on his day of departure from London are understandable. Mandela confided: "I dread going back and telling Luthuli I am committed to the armed struggle".¹⁶

Mandela then travelled a second time to Addis Ababa to receive six months of military training. Training was rudimentary, but included drill marches, firing with an automatic rifle and pistol, demolition and mortar firing. Mandela learned to make and avoid bombs and mines. He spent much of his time being trained in military science and tactics by an Ethiopian officer. After only eight weeks, the ANC urgently requested Mandela return home as the "internal armed struggle was escalating and they wanted the

¹³ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 351.

¹⁴ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 355.

¹⁵ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 362.

¹⁶ Sampson, *Mandela*, 187.

commander of *MK* on the scene”.¹⁷ Mandela returned to South Africa. After only eight weeks of training, Mandela had to lead his army in defeating the most powerful military force on the African continent.

Upon his return to South Africa on 24 July, Mandela immediately reported to the NWC to highlight the lessons learned during his journeys. During Mandela’s trip, contentions arose about the nature of the ANC and its leader’s just published autobiography. If the winning of the Nobel Peace Prize did not embarrass Mandela enough by creating “the impression that he was a tool of the West”, then Luthuli’s autobiography did.¹⁸ Mandela’s comments about Luthuli’s autobiography reflected the embarrassment felt by some within the movement about Luthuli’s newspaper editorials that made him appear to be an Uncle Tom and a liberal. The embarrassment caused by the February publication of Luthuli’s autobiography did not escape Mandela who observed in his diary that “some of his statements have been extremely unfortunate and have created the impression of a man who is a stooge of the Whites”.¹⁹ Mandela felt the autobiography “compromised the ANC”, justifying his advocacy that the ANC become, at least in image, more of an African nationalist rather than a multi-racial movement.²⁰ Mandela and Luthuli’s second disconcerting and inconclusive discussion reaffirmed Luthuli’s unwillingness to forego the ANC’s multiracial and non-violent ethos developed over many decades.

Luthuli had good reason to be hesitant, if not hostile, to Mandela’s suggestion that the ANC become more race conscious. Luthuli intended his non-violent strategies to

¹⁷ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 363.

Again, the fact that the ANC, and not the *MK* High Command, requested Mandela’s return is very curious. The ANC remained non-violent by agreement. What had the ANC to do with an escalating internal armed struggle? More than likely, Mandela had to return home early because his ‘army’ was being arrested, tried and imprisoned very quickly as a result of the initial failings of *MK*’s launch. Lodge speculated that Sisulu recalled him, worried that a prolonged absence would demoralise *MK* rank and file as anxieties regarding whether Mandela would return to South Africa increased.

Lodge, *Mandela*, 100.

¹⁸ SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 433.

¹⁹ Lodge, *Mandela*, 101.

²⁰ SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 433.

Sifiso Ndlovu’s chapter “The ANC in Exile, 1960-1970”, indicated that Luthuli’s autobiography “had been dedicated to a white woman, Mary-Louise Hooper of the United States” (433). This is false. In all the issues of “Let My People Go”, from the first (1962) to the last published (2006), Luthuli dedicated his book to “Mother Africa”, to “Mtonya” his mother and to “Nokukhanya” his wife “to whom, under God”, he felt “most deeply indebted”.

focus on the conscience of the western, liberal and Christian world, that is, Europe and North America, whereas Mandela's military path focused upon the receiving succour from newly emerging independent African countries. During his trip to North and West Africa, Mandela frequently became frustrated by the PAC's propaganda against the ANC. Recently colonised Africa identified with a militaristic outlook and sympathised with a racial divide whereas the ANC's non-violent and multi-racial policy failed to impress or inspire if it was understood at all. Luthuli did not necessarily desire to impress Africa. His objective was the long-term acceptance and support of the western world and Africa's fusion, not separation, with it as a free and equal partner. In December 1961 during the events celebrating his reception of the Peace Prize, Luthuli wooed the West. Beginning in January 1962, Mandela sought to woo Africa.

History suggests Luthuli had been right. By 1990, the support of the frontline states and MK's insufficient incursions into South Africa had not succeeded in effecting a regime change. Rather, a combination of non-violent internal pressure from the churches, trade unions and the UDF and from external pressure from economic sanctions fuelled by international public opinion against Apartheid precipitated regime change. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of Communism that atrophied the eastern bloc's support of African liberation movements and hence the absence of the Communist 'boogiemán' enabled churches in the United States and Europe in the late 1980s to sufficiently politically influence western governments to support democracy in South Africa. The PAC eventually became irrelevant outside and inside South Africa. The PAC's pro-Africanist stance may have appealed to the newly emerging African states. But, it undermined the PAC's efforts to generate support outside Africa. Countries like Sweden and Norway, long time supporters of the ANC, did not support the PAC because of its "expressions of racial character".²¹ Tor Sellström, author of texts related to the anti-Apartheid struggle in Scandinavia, reflected the degree to which the PAC failed to obtain assistance from the world's most supportive constituency against Apartheid.

²¹ Interview with Gunner Helander, Västerås, 12 February 1996. Found in: Sellström, *Liberation in Southern Africa – Regional and Swedish Voices*, 287.

Although recognised by the Organisation of African Unity, [the] PAC would never receive direct assistance from the Swedish government, nor did it enjoy any tangible support from the NGO community in Sweden. Both at the official level and at the non-official level, Swedish support was from the outset extended to the ANC...Sweden almost became a closed area for the PAC.²²

Helander in Sweden and Collins in England, each of whom led efforts to raise funds for the International Defence and Aid Fund that Luthuli praised so heavily and to which he felt so indebted, represented the constituency to which Luthuli appealed. Luthuli's allegiance to the liberal West that admired the ANC's multi-racial character bound him to the time-honoured ANC position. Luthuli's philosophical/theological and strategic allegiance to multi-racialism motivated his resistance to Mandela's desire to change the ANC so that it could be more attractive to African states as was the PAC.

"Let My People Go"

On 18 January 1962, William Collins publishers released Luthuli's autobiography entitled, *Let My People Go*.²³ Luthuli's autobiography embarrassed Mandela and other militant leaders across the continent. When many read in Luthuli's autobiography "We do not struggle with guns and violence, and the supremacist's array of weapons is powerless against the spirit", Mandela claimed at the PAFMECSA conference in Ethiopia that it was a "crime" for the leadership to hesitate to change tactics when those tactics proved futile.²⁴ Collins released Luthuli's autobiography just prior to Mandela's speech in Addis Ababa. In the book, Luthuli preached non-violence; in Addis Ababa Mandela argued that such a gospel is a crime. Because Mandela and Luthuli's contestation

²² Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, 1: 171.

²³ *Daily News*, "Autobiography of Luthuli Out Next Year", 25 October 1961.

Daily News, "Fanfare for Book by Luthuli", 13 November 1961.

Guardian (Manchester), "South Africa's Black Stallion", by Alan Paton, 18 January 1962.

Daily News, "African Leader's Autobiography: 'Let My People Go': Luthuli Tells His Side of Story of Non-White 'Resistance'", 18 January 1962.

²⁴ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 227.

Luthuli also stated in his book, "We mean to continue to use such [non-violent and passive resistance] methods" and "As long as our patience can be made to hold out, we shall not jeopardise the South Africa of tomorrow by precipitating violence today" (postscript, 218).

Cape Times, "A Different Perspective: Albert Luthuli's Autobiography", by A. R. Delius, 22 February 1962.

reached its height during this period, a closer examination of Luthuli's autobiography is thus required.

Cited thus far in this study are just some of Luthuli's ubiquitous references to non-violent methods in his autobiography. Chapters four and five identified the Hoopers' role in its drafting. Not yet examined is the significance of the title *Let My People Go* and how it reveals Luthuli's conceptualised role. "Let My People Go" is the prophet Moses' divinely inspired biblical refrain to the Egyptian Pharaoh who oppressed the Hebrew nation.²⁵ "Let My People Go" and "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross", connotes that Luthuli perceived himself to be a spiritual leader as much as if not more than a political leader.

The title of Luthuli's autobiography is partial evidence that Luthuli likened himself to be involved in what may be described as a 'typological re-enactment'.²⁶ Typological re-enactment is a method or lens of biblical hermeneutics whereby one discerns one's context, calling or life direction, by identifying with personalities in the biblical narrative. Typological enactment encourages one to emulate faithful biblical personalities or conversely learn from them if they failed in some way. Interpreting Luthuli to have re-enacted the role of Moses illuminates how he fathomed the past and his compliance with fostering God's intentions or will for the future. Luthuli's emulation of Moses became a simple method of making relevant the biblical text to his life.²⁷

Though Luthuli did not receive formal theological training that would prepare him specifically for the vocation of ministry, his strong faith, adequate education, innate intelligence and Christian upbringing made him a formidable lay minister. If Luthuli had opted for the ordained ministry, he would have succeeded admirably.²⁸ While he had

²⁵ Exodus 3:7 (NIV): "The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of the slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering'".

²⁶ The term 'typological re-enactment' was utilised by:

Alton Templin, *Ideology on a Frontier: The Theological Foundation of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1652-1910* (Westport: Greenwood, 1984), 117.

²⁷ Other evidence Luthuli visualised himself to be a participant in a typological reenactment is a sermon he preached entitled "Christian Life: A Constant Adventure" at Adams Mission one week prior to publicising "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross" in reaction to his being relieved of the chieftaincy. The below article affirmed that the faith-based sermon inspired the politically-applied statement.

Scott Couper, "When Chief Albert Luthuli Launched 'Into the Deep': A Theological Reflection on a Homiletic Resource of Political Significance", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 130, March 2008, 76-89 and 108-11.

²⁸ Interestingly, the earlier cited 2004 SABC3 survey identified Luthuli as a 'cleric' before a 'politician'.

sufficient formal and self-education to effectively articulate the fundamentals of Christianity, and arguably do so more proficiently than his peers who did enter the ministry, Luthuli did not formally study theology and could not develop for himself a 'systematic' theology, a theology that, to the extent that is possible, is comprehensively logical, doctrinal and integrated. As a lay person, Luthuli's theology would have been 'parochial' rather than systematic. Rather than doctrine, philosophy or direct revelation, typological re-enactment relies on narratives to convey various descriptive and proscriptive themes. The narratives may be in the form of myth, parable or actual historic personalities and occurrences.

The title of Luthuli's autobiography propounds that he envisaged himself to be a Moses figure. Moses waged a political struggle utilising non-violent methods. Yes, the divine interventions that convinced Pharaoh to allow the Hebrews to leave Egypt were undeniably forceful, even deadly.²⁹ Nevertheless, they were neither the direct result of Moses' hand nor the result of a Hebrew army.³⁰ For Moses, the means to liberation were fidelity and obedience to God.³¹ Pharaoh's heart would be hardened and his kingdom would suffer catastrophe due its own leader's intransigent position.³²

Luthuli did not envision himself as a Joshua, Saul, David or Solomon who through military might would build a great nation. Rather, he looked to Moses who humbly led in obedience despite all of his inadequacies.³³ Time after time, Moses' obedience resulted in failure as the Pharaoh repeatedly rescinded his mercy. Yet, Moses continued to confront Pharaoh and repeated the refrain, "Let my people go!"³⁴

Even following the Hebrews' liberation, Moses' role as a moral leader coincided with his role as a political leader for he provided the Hebrew people with the Ten

Answers.com, "SABC3s Great South Africans". Found at:

<http://www.answers.com/topic/sabc3-s-great-south-africans>, accessed 16 October 2008.

²⁹ The Ten Plagues of blood, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and firstborn males are violent in the extreme (Exodus 7-11).

³⁰ In fact, in his youth, Moses incurred the wrath of the state by killing an Egyptian who beat a Hebrew (Exodus 2:12). This killing resulted in Moses' self-imposed exile and prolonged refugee status (Exodus 2:15).

³¹ Exodus 4:21a, 7:2 and 12:24.

³² Exodus 4:21b, 7:2, 8:15, 8:19, 8:32, 9:7, 9:12, 9:34-35, 10:20, 10:27 and 11:10.

³³ Exodus 4:10: "Moses said to the Lord, 'O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue'".

³⁴ The actual refrain was: "Let my people go, so that they may worship me" found in Exodus 8:1, 8:20, 9:1, 9:13. In Exodus 5:1 it reads: "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness".

Commandments and the Torah (The Law).³⁵ Luthuli perhaps even foreshadowed his inability to see the Promised Land of his own people's liberation when he predicted in his 1952 "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross" statement:

What the future has in store for me I do not know. It might be ridicule, imprisonment, concentration camp, flogging, banishment and even death. I only pray to the Almighty to strengthen my resolve so that none of these grim possibilities may deter me from striving, for the sake of the good name of our beloved country, the Union of South Africa, to make it a true democracy and a true union in form and spirit of all the communities of the land.³⁶

And like Moses, Luthuli would not reach the Promised Land.³⁷ Like Moses who led the Chosen People that were to be a light to all nations, Luthuli saw himself leading South Africa as "a new example to the world".³⁸

I personally believe that here in South Africa, with all our diversities of colour and race, we will show the world a new pattern for democracy. I think there is a challenge to us in South Africa to set a new example for the world. Let us not side-step that task.³⁹

On the first Sunday morning of 1967, months before his death, Luthuli listened on the radio to a sermon preached at a Congregationalist church in Cape Town where the minister suggested that God's response to one's prayers is often "No".⁴⁰ This sermon

³⁵ Exodus 20.

³⁶ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 235.

This portion of Luthuli's statement is strikingly parallel with Martin Luther King's speech "I Have a Dream". One can only wonder to what degree, if any, did Luthuli's statement inspire King. Did both consciously see themselves in a re-enactment of Moses' life? Did both have a premonition that 'the dream' would not be achieved in their lifetimes?

³⁷ Deuteronomy 32:48-52 and Deuteronomy 34.

³⁸ The book of Deuteronomy concludes: "Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt – to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 34:10-12).

³⁹ UCT, MAD, LC, BC 930, A 5, "Freedom Is the Apex" also known as "Our Vision Is a Democratic Society", by Albert Luthuli, speech delivered to a meeting organised by the South African COD in Johannesburg, 1958.

⁴⁰ Handwritten notes by Luthuli written on Sunday, 08 January 1967 at 11:00 as he listened to a sermon by Rev. W. M. H. Terrant at the Rondebosch Congregational Church, Cape Town.

would have resonated with Luthuli's re-enactment of Moses. Moses desired to enter the Promised Land. God told Moses that he would not; he would only see it from a distance.⁴¹ Luthuli also wished to see that for which he strove so obediently. In his autobiography's epilogue, Luthuli wrote:

I speak humbly and without levity when I say that, God giving me strength and courage enough, I shall die, if need be, for [the struggle]. But I do not want to die until I have seen the building begun.⁴²

Luthuli's request was not granted. Even with the companionship of Nokukhanya, the final years of Luthuli's life were lonely. Government restrictions, his own adherence to non-violence and his aging body marginalised him from the ANC and the world. Luthuli fought for a South Africa that would belong to Blacks, Indians, Coloureds and Whites. As Luthuli's life waned, white South Africans who were resistant to change retreated farther into their *laager*, 'armed to the teeth'. *MK*'s launch unleashed the state's wrath, resulting in the imprisoning and/or exiling of other leaders of the liberation movement. By resorting to violence, Luthuli's ANC followers turned away from him as the leader of the ANC despite his retention of the title 'President-General'. Luthuli's people had let *him* go.

For six months after its initial publication, copies of "Let My People Go" were sold in South Africa. The Minister of Justice, Vorster, allowed the sale of unsold books in stock already imported from England into South Africa. In August 1962 Vorster indicated that no more copies would be allowed to be imported as the General Law Amendment (Sabotage) Act banned it.⁴³

UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, notebooks (dealing with church services and sermons").

⁴¹ Exodus 32:52.

⁴² Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 230.

⁴³ *Daily News*, "Minister Consents to Book's Sale", 06 August 1962.

Embarrassment to the Congresses

In chapter five, this study maintains that those who initiated the violence in Natal in December 1961 did not communicate with nor did they receive instructions from Luthuli. Because Luthuli had a close friendship with Rowley Arenstein and both operated from Natal, Arenstein's perspective on Luthuli's stance on violence is enlightening.⁴⁴ Arenstein, a local attorney in Durban, frequently represented those who became entangled with the law for political reasons, for example, women involved in the beer hall riots. In 1958, Arenstein strategised with Luthuli on how to increase the movement and expand the active membership of ANC by focusing on grassroots issues thus increasing its membership from 1,000 in 1958 to 20,000 in 1959. According to Arenstein, he ran the Durban branch of the ANC during the 1960 State of Emergency. After the government banned the ANC, Arenstein suggested they re-name the organisation the "African National Council" and they could, according to a then-recent Supreme Court ruling, continue to work to achieve the ANC's objectives as the government banned the ANC and not its objectives. The ANC refused, and according to Arenstein, resigned itself to the fact that the government closed all avenues of non-violent methods and hence concluded only the option of violence remained. Soon after Mandela launched *MK* in December 1961, the Joint Congresses met in January 1962 during which Arenstein argued vociferously against its creation and questioned under whose control the military wing would fall. Arenstein adamantly affirmed that Luthuli objected to *MK*'s launch. Arenstein told his interviewer quite emphatically:

⁴⁴ Kwamuhle Museum, File number 545617, Accession number 99/3697 – 3699 – 4200 - 4204, Interview with Rowley Arenstein, recording track (11 10 25 12) through (13 12 16 15). It must be noted that Arenstein articulated a prejudice against the armed struggle. Arenstein declared the "so-called armed struggle" to be "totally uncalled for. It had to fail which it did. Whatever people say about it, it failed" (11 10 32 18). Arenstein left the Communist Party over its decision to initiate an armed struggle prior to the ANC and Joint Congresses' decision to do the same (11 20 24 10). Arenstein felt betrayed by the Communist Party because he felt that it intentionally excluded him when making the decision to opt for violence. Due to Arenstein's objections to the decision to initiate violence, the Communist Party expelled him (12 08 50 16).

[Luthuli] very strongly believed in non-violence. At no stage, did Luthuli ever agree to a change of violence. Never!⁴⁵

At least with the wider and international public, Luthuli was not a spent political force as 1962 began. He published a number of articles increasing his public appeal. In February, African-Americans' Chicago based *Ebony* magazine published an article by Luthuli entitled, "What I Would Do If I Were Prime Minister" wherein he laid out his political manifesto.⁴⁶ Another American magazine, *Atlantic Monthly*, reprinted the article the next month.⁴⁷ In this article, Luthuli provided broad perspectives on land reform, trade union rights, democratic polity, housing, education and foreign policy. The 01 February issue of *New Age* published a statement entitled, "We Don't Want Crumbs".⁴⁸ In this article, his autobiography and his many columns on the subject in the *Post*, Luthuli expressed his perspectives on democracy, society and civilisation as he intoned against the government's proposed homeland policy.

These topics would not have at all disturbed Luthuli more militant colleagues. However, Luthuli's incessant harping on non-violence deeply disturbed many of them following *MK*'s launch. Luthuli publicised views that directly contradicted Mandela's views found in *MK*'s manifesto. For example, on 25 March 1962, Luthuli's regular column published in the *Post* read:

When we strive for the same goal through non-violent methods, the government visits us with more and harsher laws to suppress – if not completely destroy – our liberation efforts. IS THIS NOT INVITING THE OPPRESSED TO DESPERATION? NONETHELESS, I WOULD URGE OUR PEOPLE NOT TO DESPAIR OVER OUR METHODS OF STRUGGLE, THE MILITANT, NONVIOLENT TECHNIQUES. SO FAR WE HAVE FAILED THE METHODS – NOT THE METHOD US (Luthuli's emphasis).⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Kwamuhle Museum, File number 545617, Accession number 99/3697 – 3699 – 4200 - 4204, Interview with Rowley Arenstein, recording track (11 10 25 12) through (13 12 16 15).

⁴⁶ *Ebony*, "What I Would Do If I Were Prime Minister", by Albert Luthuli, February 1962. Found in: Luthuli, *Luthuli Speaks*, 74.

Albert Luthuli, *The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross*, 73-83.

⁴⁷ *Atlantic Monthly*, "If I Were Prime Minister", by Albert Luthuli, March 1962, 61-4.

Readers' comments to Luthuli's article were printed in the July 1962 issue on page 33.

⁴⁸ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 146-9.

⁴⁹ *Golden City Post*, "Our Way Is Right – We Must Keep On", by Albert Luthuli, 25 March 1962.

The same month the *Post* published the above column excerpt, a report of a Congresses' Joint Executive (CJE) meeting recorded:

A speaker stated that the articles which Chief Luthuli wrote for "Golden City Post" were frequently so mutilated that the policies expressed there were on occasion distorted, thus being of some embarrassment to the Congresses. A delegate agreed that the matter would be taken up.⁵⁰

The above report suggests that Luthuli was reprimanded by his own movement. Apparently, it was felt that Luthuli's overreached in his advocacy for non-violent methods by coming dangerously close to condemning the turn to violence. This breach could not be tolerated. Luthuli needed to be counselled to not embarrass the movement. Following the matter's resolution, much of the leadership felt assured that such sentiments from Luthuli would no longer be heard or read.

Before Luthuli's death, the ANC refrained from making any assertion that he supported the armed movement. Not only did Luthuli consistently oppose the use of violence, he continued to advocate strict non-violence until he was possibly advised to do so no longer. The index of seventy-six articles itemised by the Bailey's African Photo Archives indicated that Luthuli's last article for the *Post* was published on 27 May 1962. Luthuli's columns stopped two months after the above criticism recorded in the minutes of the CJE. After reviewing all the articles in the *Post* collection, only the 25 March 1962 column conflicts with the July 1961 resolution to form an armed movement. Aside from his opposition to violence, Luthuli does not "distort" any of the ANC's stated policies. After writing some seventy articles for the *Post*, it is incomprehensible that Luthuli would continue to contribute submissions if his columns were being adulterated. The length and style of the columns are uniform and characteristic of Luthuli's pen.⁵¹ Therefore, it seems clear that the *Post* did little or no editing to Luthuli's original drafts.

⁵⁰ UWC, RIMA, MCH 229, Report of a meeting of the Congresses' Joint Executives held in March 1962, 7.

⁵¹ For example, within the Luthuli Papers at UCT and UNISA is a draft column entitled "The Meaning and Significance of Christmas". Except for the small title change, Luthuli's draft is identical to the column published in the *Post*.

BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "The Meaning of Christmas", by Albert Luthuli, 25 December 1960. UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, "The Meaning and Significance of Christmas", 1959 (sic). Actually, 1960.

After Luthuli's above cited March publication in the *Post*, virtually nothing is heard from him regarding non-violence save for an April column statement that mildly read:

The mood of white South Africa forces on us the use of militant efforts – on non-violent lines – in the prosecution of our struggle.⁵²

How and when the ANC through the CJE advised Luthuli to curb his statements advocating non-violence is unknown. The archives are silent on this issue. Luthuli and the ANC likely established a covenant that committed him to not criticise or question the turn to violence. In March 1963, soon after his escape from South Africa, the ANC's Secretary General, Duma Nokwe, travelled to Stockholm, Sweden where he delivered a very militant speech at the launch of a national consumer boycott campaign held in Stockholm. Also at this launch, Nokwe read a message telephonically transmitted by Tambo in London encouraging a boycott of South African goods. The message was said to be authorised by Luthuli. During his visit, Nokwe spoke in regard to the methods of struggle, indicating that the ANC had no choice but "to abandon its policy of non-violence", that "there no longer [were] any peaceful ways left' and that the South African people would 'not get its (sic) freedom without a (sic) bloody chaos'".⁵³ Notably, Nokwe emphasised, "And I assure you that our leader, Albert Luthuli, will not condemn that".⁵⁴

Sabotage Act

Luthuli could have continued to contribute to the *Post* until at least 24 June 1962, the date of his last domestic publication in *New Age*. If those within the liberation movement did not pressure Luthuli to refrain from making "embarrassing" statements, then the government did. When the General Law Amendment Bill became the Sabotage Act of 27 June 1962, it "prohibited the reproduction of any statement made anywhere at any time (including any time in the past) by a person who was banned from attending

⁵² BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, "No Change in Heart among the Whites", by Albert Luthuli, 29 April 1962.

⁵³ Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, 1: 193.

⁵⁴ Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, 1: 193.

gatherings”.⁵⁵ The Act also prescribed the death penalty for a wide range of offences and allowed the government to commit people to house arrest. Some viewed the legislation to spell “civil death” for those on whom it fell. With this piece of legislation, the government silenced Luthuli within South Africa’s borders until his death. Luthuli, fully aware of the impact this piece of legislation would have, wrote against it three days before it became law.⁵⁶ The illegality of quoting Luthuli may have been a relief to many who thought that his continued advocacy of non-violent methods was tantamount to, in Mandela’s words, “committing a crime” against his own people.

Regarding historical memory, Luthuli’s prolonged silence within South Africa, neither for nor against the violent movement, transcends the relatively short period of time from 16 December 1961 when *MK* launched until 29 April 1962 when for the last time Luthuli advocated strict non-violence in his *Post* column. The non-recognition of this brief and forgotten slice of time allows the ANC to disingenuously claim that once the ANC made the decision to initiate the armed movement, “Luthuli did not falter”.

Internationally, Luthuli could not be silenced. Before the Act became law, Luthuli wrote a statement for publication in England’s *The Guardian* opposing it. On 08 July 1962, the *Guardian* published Luthuli’s article soon after its reception. In his statement, Luthuli communicated his characteristically buoyant and optimistic outlook despite contemplating the draconian legislation. Luthuli portrayed himself as the eternal optimist, never doubting the fall of tyranny. Doubt only existed regarding liberation’s timing and cost. His statement in the *Guardian* related that, unlike Mandela, Luthuli never concluded that the non-violent path led to a cul-de-sac. Luthuli perceived the Sabotage Act as a sign of the National Party’s desperation and indicative of the foundational weakness of the Apartheid system. Luthuli declared that the oppressive legislation stood as a governmental admission of the “effectiveness of our freedom and of its latent potentialities”.⁵⁷ As is soon shown, Luthuli’s advocacy efforts with the American Committee on Africa highlight that he considered non-violent international political and economic pressure on the Apartheid regime to be the key to liberation.

⁵⁵ Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Liberation*, 3: 664.

⁵⁶ *New Age*, “Our Struggle for Progress”, by Albert Luthuli, 24 June 1962.

⁵⁷ Albert Luthuli, “Statement on the ‘Sabotage Act’, June 1962”. Found in: ANC, “The Lutuli Page”. Found at: www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/lutuli/, accessed 25 June 2008.

In July 1962, the *Cape Times* made an initial attempt to breach the Sabotage Act by asking permission from the Minister of Justice to publish quotations by Luthuli. The effort failed. The *Cape Times* wished to ask Luthuli if the government had granted him a passport to an upcoming "Cultural Conference" in Copenhagen, Denmark to which he received an invitation. The Minister of Justice denied the request and indicated that he need never be asked again to lift Luthuli's restriction.⁵⁸

Luthuli as the "The Black Christ"

At the young age of twenty-two, Roland Harrison, the artist who painted *The Black Christ*, had the fortune to meet Luthuli in 1962 under clandestine circumstances. Harrison painted the figure of Christ, crucified on a cross, with Luthuli's features.⁵⁹ With the permission of Archbishop de Blank, St. Luke's Anglican Church in Salt River unveiled the painting. The painting drew a storm of controversy. Not only did Christ appear as a Black, but the two Roman soldiers resembled the Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, and the Minister of Justice, John Vorster. Jan de Klerk (F. W. Klerk's father), then Minister of the Interior, instructed that the painting be taken down and the young artist appear before the Censorship Board.⁶⁰ The Board subsequently banned the painting, ruling that it offended religious sensibilities. Following a documentary on the painting aired on the American television network CBS, the government ordered the painting to be destroyed. Danish and Swedish allies of the anti-Apartheid movement smuggled the painting to Great Britain where, under Collins' care its display raised a substantial sum of money for the Defence and Aid Fund.⁶¹ Harrison suffered arrest and torture at the hands of the Special Branch who through their interrogations aimed to

⁵⁸ *Natal Mercury*, "Lutuli Now Silenced: Vorster Declares Ban", 04 July 1962.

⁵⁹ *Reader's Digest*, "The Incredible Journey of South Africa's 'Black Christ'", by Dougie Oakes, Christmas 2003, 30-1.

⁶⁰ Once source incorrectly claims that F. W. de Klerk ordered the painting to be taken down. "Defiance, Incarceration, Torture, House Arrest, Hope", brochure for Ronald Harrison's The Black Christ Foundation, not dated.

⁶¹ Ultimately, Julius Baker, a South African exile, stored the painting in the basement of his London home until the late 1990s when he returned it to South Africa.

Natal Mercury, "Give Back 'The Black Christ'", by Ismail Meer, 04 August 1996.

discover with whom Harrison collaborated to paint and display *The Black Christ*.⁶² Harrison served eight years of house arrest on account of charges stemming from his painting.

Knowing about the painting and its significance, Luthuli expressed a desire to meet Harrison. The Norwegian Embassy arranged a clandestine visit to Luthuli for Harrison. At great risk, the Norwegians smuggled Harrison from Cape Town to Durban, driving slowly through the night taking advantage of the cover of darkness. Harrison met Luthuli in Groutville within a corrugated iron shack designated to be the rendezvous site. In his book, Harrison recounted his memorable meeting with Luthuli:

A deep strong voice said "Hello, my son". I stammered some greeting in return, and as he grasped my hands with his, a distinct energy seemed to course through my body...Then, suddenly, like a newborn baby entering the world for the first time, I burst into tears. I cannot explain whether it was the magic of that moment, or sheer magnetism of the occasion, but the next thing I knew two strong arms had wrapped themselves around me and once again a strong comforting voice said, "It's alright to cry, my son...It's okay...I can see that you have already endured so much...It's okay..." I felt the strength of his compassion flow into my trembling body and fill my soul".⁶³

These touching recollections relate Luthuli's pastoral attributes. Though, more pertinent to this study is an interview with Harrison wherein he shared specific details of Luthuli's stance on violence in 1962.

Harrison: I, ah, may I just add something which I, I don't know how I forgot to mention it...I met this noble man and when I met him during the course of the conversation, I remember the words very very clearly: "My son, violence is not the answer. It will never be the answer". And those were, and they...

Couper: He *said* those words to you? He *said* that to you?

Harrison: Yes. He says to me, "Violence is not the answer; it will never be the answer to our problems". And this is, this is what he says to me, "The road that lies ahead, is very, its going to be very very...it's a stormy

⁶² Roland Harrison, *The Black Christ: A Journey to Freedom* (Claremont: David Philip, 2006), 47-60.

⁶³ Harrison, *The Black Christ*, 66-7.

road...you have to travel soberly". He says to me, "You've done something that's very dangerous". He says, "But, you were very very brave. You should feel very proud", he says. "What you have done is something that was non-violent. You have spoken in a non-violent manner". And, he was so sweet to me, "You know", he says, "You caused such a fervour", he says to me that, "what you have actually done", he says..."You have highlighted the plight of the Blacks now with this, this is what you have done".⁶⁴

The private meeting with Harrison conveyed that Luthuli sought out creative non-violent methods of resistance and that advertising the struggle against Apartheid to the international world would in time secure freedom.

Rector of Glasgow University

In October 1962, students in South Africa and the United Kingdom honoured Luthuli. On 07 October, Luthuli accepted the National Union of South African Students' (NUSAS) offer to become their honorary President.⁶⁵ On 22 October 1962, students at the University of Glasgow elected Luthuli as Lord Rector in recognition of his "dignity and restraint" in a "potentially inflammatory situation", i.e., for his non-violence resistance to Apartheid.⁶⁶ The rectorship of the university was "purely honorary".⁶⁷ As Rector, Luthuli's role would have been to be the Chair of the University Court, the chief executive body of the University that met monthly. Students elected Luthuli for the position knowing that he would serve *in absentia*. Technically, this obstacle did not prevent Luthuli's candidacy as it was customary that very important rectors were not expected to attend any meetings; nonetheless, his unavailability became a contentious campaign issue among students. Due to Luthuli's unavailability to chair, an assessor needed to be chosen with his consent to represent him.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Interview with Roland Harrison, Cape Town, 14 January 2006.

⁶⁵ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Luthuli Accepts Honour", 08 October 1962.

NUSAS re-elected Luthuli President the following year.

Daily News, "Student's Salute Luthuli", 24 August 1963.

⁶⁶ "The Legacy of Inkosi Albert Luthuli", commemorative brochure, 21 August 2004, 15.

⁶⁷ *Star*, "Luthuli in Poll Today", 22 October 1962.

⁶⁸ *Star*, "Delay in Selecting University Stand-In for Luthuli", 23 November 1962.

The University approved Dr. T. Honeyman, former Director of the Glasgow art galleries, as Luthuli's representative.

Luthuli's election can not be described as insignificant as he was the first foreigner and 'non-White' to be nominated for Rector. Though Luthuli accepted the nomination and thus agreed to stand for election, he did not campaign against the other candidates.⁶⁹ Students campaigned in his favour, easily obtaining Luthuli's electoral win. The students themselves inappropriately marred the election, with rival factions contesting each other, a *mêlée* erupted and some thirty-four students were arrested for breach of the peace and forming part of a disorderly crowd.⁷⁰

Aside from one phone call from a student representative soon after his election, Luthuli never acted as the Rector.⁷¹ Print media reports at the time indicate that after an initial correspondence informing Luthuli of his election, no other correspondences from the University reached him; the government presumably intercepted and confiscated all mail from the university to Luthuli.⁷² In parliament, in response to questions by Helen Suzman, the government denied the allegation.⁷³ Mahomed, who received Luthuli's post on his behalf, indicated that Luthuli did not even receive the invitation to Scotland to be installed or the request to nominate an assessor.⁷⁴ In mid-1963, Luthuli applied for a passport to attend the long-postponed installation. After a long delay, the government finally rejected the application in January 1964.⁷⁵ A very disappointed David Holmes, President of the Students Representative Council, indicated that Luthuli's

Publication unknown, "To Represent Lutuli at University", 03 May 1963.

⁶⁹ Other candidates included a race car driver (Stirling Moss), race horse owner (the Earl Rosebery), British Lord and Member of Parliament (Edward Heath) and the Chairman of the Scottish National Party (Dr. R. McIntyre). Moss subsequently withdrew, recommending Luthuli.

Star, "Luthuli for Rector", 16 August 1962.

Rand Daily Mail, "Luthuli Better Man for Task – Moss: Glasgow Honour", 02 October 1962.

Star, "Moss Stands Down for Luthuli", 02 October 1962.

Rand Daily Mail, "Luthuli in Lead for Rector of Glasgow University", 05 October 1962.

⁷⁰ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Luthuli Is Honoured – Then Scots 'Rag' Police", 23 October 1962.

Star, "Students in Brawl after Election of Luthuli as Rector", 23 October 1962.

⁷¹ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Rector of Glasgow on Phone", 26 October 1962.

⁷² *Rand Daily Mail*, "Luthuli Letters Missing – Scots Student", 02 February 1963.

Sunday Times, "Hertzog to be Asked about Luthuli's Missing Mail", 03 February 1963.

Daily News, "Lutuli's Missing Mail", 06 February 1963.

⁷³ *Rand Daily Mail*, No title, 13 February 1963.

London Times, "Luthuli's Letters 'Went Missing'", 13 February 1963, 8d.

⁷⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, "Only Glasgow Mail Missing, He Says", 02 February 1963.

Rand Daily Mail, "Luthuli's Missing Mail: New Facts", 15 February 1963.

Natal Mercury, "Luthuli Post: Probe to be Called For", 04 February 1963.

⁷⁵ *Star*, "Luthuli Has Asked for Passport", 10 July 1963.

Daily News, "Government's 'No' to Lutuli Installation", 24 January 1964.

complete absence from the rectorship would render him the first not to attend an installation.⁷⁶ The University never held the ceremony.⁷⁷

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Both Luthuli and Martin Luther King, Jr. won the Nobel Peace Prize. Luthuli won the 1960 Prize and King won the 1964 Prize.⁷⁸ For both Luthuli and King, the Prizes recognised their non-violent stance in the struggle against white supremacy in South Africa and the United States, respectively. Both Luthuli and King possessed similar views on the efficacy of non-violent tactics as a means by which to oppose oppression and injustice. Specifically, Luthuli and King agreed on the strategic and ethical rationale for non-violent methods of resistance. Perhaps most importantly, both Luthuli and King relied upon an ecclesiastical and theological foundation that provided their inspiration to maintain non-violent tactics against the constant seduction of more militant resisters of white supremacy.

One commonality between King and Luthuli is far less known and may shed much light on Luthuli's thinking: both denied being pacifists. ANC veterans use the fact that Luthuli was not a pacifist to convey that he came to support the ANC's turn to violence. Despite their similar stances, King's legacy of non-violent advocacy never received the reversal that Luthuli's does.

How does one specifically explain the "seeming" contradiction between Luthuli's strategic support of pacifist methods and his repeated denial that he subscribed to pacifism?⁷⁹ This study must resolve Luthuli's deceptively contradictory stance on

⁷⁶ *Star*, "Luthuli Has Asked for Passport", 10 July 1963.

Daily News, "University Is Upset Over Mr. Lutuli", 02 August 1963.

⁷⁷ *London Times*, "No Ceremony without Luthuli", 17 October 1963, 7a.

⁷⁸ Luthuli's 1960 Nobel Prize was only announced in October 1961 and thus accepted in December 1961. Luthuli was the first African Prize winner and King was the youngest.

⁷⁹ I understand that all humans have contradictory views, either simultaneously or at different contexts in their lives. Humans are not necessarily purely rational and thus logical. Therefore, contradictions need not always be logically resolved and thus rationally explained. So, why can't this study grant Luthuli a human trait that all humans' share, particularly politicians? The answer is twofold. First, seminal tenets of Luthuli's thought that he frequently publicly articulated revolved around non-violence. Hence, a contradiction concerning the use of violence would have been egregious. Luthuli made pains to explain himself clearly and forcefully. Second, and with great risk of criticism from those that rightly warn against the writing of hagiographies, this study finds Luthuli profoundly consistent in all facets of his life and in all

violence as those who claim Luthuli supported the armed movement depend almost entirely on his statements denying a subscription to pacifism. Because King and Luthuli were contemporaries and they both shared a common theological foundation that determined their political views, King's theological perspective is useful in explaining the paradox found in Luthuli. King's thought proves illuminating when explaining Luthuli, for King was more articulate and nuanced than Luthuli when conveying his faith-based convictions. This was not necessarily due to a cerebral prowess possessed by King and lacked by Luthuli. Rather, a variance existed because King as ordained minister who formally studied theology and received a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University could best articulate an ethical rationale.⁸⁰ On the other hand, economic circumstances constrained Luthuli to work as a teacher so that he could financially support his mother, thus turning down a scholarship to Fort Hare where he would have at least received a Bachelor's degree. Nevertheless, the Christian faith no less influenced Luthuli than King; Luthuli represented the quintessential *Kholwa*: born, raised and educated in the bosom of American Congregationalism transplanted to Natal by the American Board. King's theological thought illuminates Luthuli's existential angst regarding the moral dilemma of violence. A theological understanding of Luthuli allows historians to better understand him and his politics; and a clearer understanding of him results in a more accurate articulation of South African history and Luthuli's fundamental role in its formation.

Only two months before the Congresses Alliance agreed to form *MK*, a column in the 28 May 1961 issue of the *Post* entitled "Why I Believe in Non-Violence" appeared. This column served as a veritable treatise on Luthuli's rationale of pacifism. The column began:

I firmly believe in non-violence. It is the only correct form which our struggle can take in South Africa. Both from the moral and the practical point of view the situation in our country demands it....To refrain from

modes of communication (verbal, written, private action and public action). Rare 'apparent' contradictions found in Luthuli on the issue of violence beg for further inquiry.

⁸⁰ King received his doctorate on 05 June 1955.

Long Island University, "Important Dates in the Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.", 4. Found at: <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/mlking.htm>, accessed 11 August 2008.

violence is the sign of the civilised man...Non-violence gives us a moral superiority...we pledge ourselves to non-violent activity because our better natures and our consciences demand this of us...My hope and prayer is that any activity on our part now or in the future time will be on peaceful lines.⁸¹

The column does not hint at a context or provocation that might warrant or justify violence. Pacifist assertions riddled the column.

If we are to be sincere when we advocate non-violence, we must see to it that we do not create situations where others, rightly or wrongly, for whatever reason, will declare it necessary to use violent methods against us...let it be remembered that to create situations where violence becomes inevitable makes one a sponsor – intentional or not – of violence.⁸²

Then, bluntly and out of the blue, Luthuli ended the column by declaring: “I am no pacifist but a realist”. Luthuli possessed solid pacifist credentials, both in word and deed. Yet, Luthuli denied his identification to that which he seemingly advocated: pacifism.

Luthuli’s public and private rejections of pacifism are consistent. In a letter to the editor printed in the *Rand Daily Mail* and reprinted by *Sechaba* in October 1967, Charles Hooper wrote quite clearly about Luthuli’s stance on violence. Hooper is a credible source as he and his wife Sheila spent many hours in discussion with Luthuli in the dictating and drafting of *Let My People Go*. The opportunity to discuss the nuances of theology and ethics regarding the issue of violence could have only been irresistible for Hooper. Luthuli dictated much of his autobiography during the months preceding the July 1961 decision to form *MK* and hence the issue of violence was foremost in his mind when working with Hooper. Hooper shared:

Publicly, [Luthuli] advocated only non-violence and dialogue because they were what he passionately wanted South Africans to believe in; but privately he maintained that Stauffenberg was right in trying to destroy Hitler...[Luthuli’s] condemnation of violence was conditional and qualified.⁸³

⁸¹ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Why I Believe in Non-Violence”, by Albert Luthuli, 28 May 1961.

⁸² BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Why I Believe in Non-Violence”, by Albert Luthuli, 28 May 1961.

⁸³ *Sechaba*, “Letter in the S. A. Press”, by Charles Hooper, October 1967, 7.

Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg was the conspirator who attempted to assassinate Adolf Hitler on

Hooper specifically mentioned that “Luthuli privately maintained” his thoughts on Stauffenberg. Therefore, Hooper did not deductively assume knowledge of Luthuli’s stance on violence, but rather shared the specifics of a private conversation he had with him on the subject.

The rationale behind Luthuli’s claim to be a realist centres on his belief that domestic and international benevolent, white, liberal and Christian advocates would be the key to South Africa’s liberation. Luthuli explained in the same May 1961 column cited above:

If we were ever to forget our high call to peaceful duty and action and turn instead to bloodshed, how can we demand and expect the sympathy of the outside world? It is important for us to win supporters for our just cause – both from inside and outside South Africa. We must widen our area of co-operation and friendship and not drive away millions of potential friends and supporters by taking the wrong, evil road.⁸⁴

The above justification for the use of non-violence is ‘smoking gun’ evidence that proves Luthuli could not and did not support the formation and launch of *MK*. Luthuli’s sentiments also explain why: Luthuli’s domestic and international constituency bound him to never countenance the loss of the moral high ground.

The most prominent rejection of pacifism occurred during Luthuli’s testimony at the Treason Trial. In response to the judge’s direct question, “Are you a pacifist?” Luthuli responded equally directly, “No, I’m not”. The debate continued, “Then perhaps you might explain the position, the difference between the non-violence campaign and your not being a pacifist?” Luthuli retorted, “My lords, I merely talk as one feels – I’m

20 July 1944. The assassination attempt failed. Only one of two bombs were armed inside the suitcase Stauffenberg left in the conference room where Hitler examined a map. A large thick conference table and a member of Hitler’s staff (who was killed) by chance shielded Hitler from the bomb blast. Hitler subsequently launched a brutal and bloody purge, killing thousands of those even remotely associated with the resistance and the conspirators, Bonhoeffer and Erwin Rommel included. Rommel though not involved in the plot, knew of it and thus Hitler gave him the option of suicide by poison or having his entire family killed before his execution. Stauffenberg was shot with other conspirators. Eight others were executed by being hung on meat hooks. Their agonising deaths were filmed and watched by Hitler. Found at: World War II Multimedia Database, “The Plot to Assassinate Hitler, July 20, 1944”, <http://www.worldwar2database.com/html/julyplot.htm>, accessed 18 August 2008.

⁸⁴ BAPA, LF, *Golden City Post*, “Why I Believe in Non-Violence”, by Albert Luthuli, 28 May 1961.

not conversant with [the] theory of pacifism, but I am not a pacifist".⁸⁵ In an interview following the announcement of his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Luthuli stated, "I must say that I would not pigeon-hole myself as a pacifist".⁸⁶ Luthuli then confessed, in a rather convoluted manner, that his faith background was primary to his thinking:

My own beliefs as I have already said are to a certain extent motivated by Christian leanings. Because of my Christian leanings I would hesitate to be a party to violence, my lords. But, of course, I must say in that connection that I am not suggesting that the Christian religion says this and that I am not a theologian, but my own leanings would be in that direction.⁸⁷

Perhaps, Luthuli lacked the tools acquired in higher education to further qualify his beliefs. Luthuli apologised for not being conversant with the theory of pacifism or a theologian that would be able to discern an authoritative Christian position (should one have ever existed).⁸⁸ A perspective on Luthuli's apparent clouded articulation of his beliefs can be illuminated by examining the same existential dynamic in King.

No archival evidence uncovers that King and Luthuli ever communicated directly with one another. When Luthuli travelled to the United States in 1948, King was only nineteen and studying theology at Crozer Seminary. Though any direct collaboration between the two on the statement was unlikely, Luthuli and King jointly issued an "Appeal for Action against Apartheid" in December 1962.⁸⁹ In King's powerfully brief

⁸⁵ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 157.

Excerpts from Luthuli's evidence at the Treason Trial (August 1958 – March 1961) dealing with his understanding of a non-violent liberation struggle.

Initially this statement is surprising, coming from a man who had pacifists as some of his closest allies (e.g., Hooper and Houser). The statement becomes less surprising when Luthuli stated he was not knowledgeable about Communism, nor had ever read Marx, when Kotane could be considered his closest political confidant.

⁸⁶ *Cape Argus*, "Luthuli Proud – But With a New Burden", 24 October 1961.

⁸⁷ Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 152.

⁸⁸ Pillay stated in his comments on the Rivonia Trial that Luthuli "often refers to 'militant non-violent struggle' where 'militant' is used to mean what Martin Luther King, Jr. meant by ['']direct non-violent action['']. This is quite consistent with [Luthuli's] claim not to be a pacifist yet choosing non-violence as the best option for political struggle".

Pillay, *Voices of Liberation*, 1: 150.

⁸⁹ ANC, Albert Luthuli and M. L. King, Jr., "Appeal for Action against Apartheid", published by the United Nations at the request of the Special Committee against Apartheid in a pamphlet tribute to Dr. King, 10 December 1962. Found at:

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/solidarity/mlking03.html>, accessed 18 August 2008.

two page acceptance speech, Luthuli is the only person mentioned by name. In accepting the Peace Prize, King stated that the Nobel Committee “honours, again, Chief Luthuli of South Africa, whose struggles with and for his people, are still met with the most brutal expression of man’s inhumanity to man”.⁹⁰

King never joined a pacifist organisation. Yet he thought, spoke and acted as a pacifist. King’s advocacy of strict non-violence stance is well documented. King’s rationale for pacifist strategies echoed Luthuli’s. King believed:

Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys communities and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends by defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers.⁹¹

Though King advocated pacifist strategies, King was not a pacifist. And neither was Luthuli. Crediting the thought of the American public theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, King once explained his perspective on pacifism that this study argues also illuminates Luthuli’s:

...Niebuhr’s great contribution to theology is that he has refuted the false optimism characteristic of a great segment of Protestant liberalism. Moreover, Niebuhr has extraordinary insight into human nature, especially the behaviour of nations and social groups. He is keenly aware of the complexity of human motives and of the relations between morality and power. His theology is a persistent reminder of the reality of sin on every level of man’s existence. These elements in Niebuhr’s thinking helped me to recognise the illusions of a superficial optimism concerning human nature, the dangers of false idealism. While I still believe in man’s

Amistad Research Centre (ARC), American Committee on Africa (ACA), Box 100, folder 20, correspondence from Luthuli to international public, September 1962, 1.

⁹⁰ Nobel Prizes.com, Martin Luther King, Jr., “Martin Luther King’s Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech”, 10 December 1964, Oslo, Norway.

<http://www.nobelprizes.com/nobel/peace/MLK-nobel.html>, accessed 18 August 2008.

⁹¹ University of KwaZulu-Natal, Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or “King” pages. Found at: <http://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/doc/TEXTS/dc/dckind.htm>, accessed 18 August 2008.

potential for good, Niebuhr made me realise his potential for evil as well. Moreover, Niebuhr helped me to recognise the complexity of man's social involvement and the glaring reality of collective evil. Many pacifists, I felt, failed to see this. All too many had an unwarranted optimism concerning man and leaned unconsciously toward self-righteousness. It was my revolt against these attitudes under the influence of Niebuhr that accounts for the fact that in spite of my strong leaning toward pacifism, I never joined a pacifist organisation. After reading Niebuhr, I tried to arrive at a realistic pacifism. In other words, I came to see the pacifist position not as sinless but as the lesser evil in the circumstances. I felt then, as I feel now, that the pacifist would have greater appeal if he did not claim to be free from the moral dilemmas that the Christian non-pacifist does.⁹²

King's explanation allows one to, first, understand Luthuli's jarring conclusion, "I am not a pacifist, I am a realist", found in his 28 May 1961 *Post* article and, second, understand why Luthuli denied the pacifist label yet advocated and lived-out its tenets.

King's sympathetic disavowal of pacifism conveys why Luthuli can best be described as a 'strategic pacifist' rather than an 'ideological pacifist'.⁹³ The distinction is important. The latter is bound by pacifism and thereby the methods of pacifism are proscribed whereas the former is informed by pacifism and thereby the methods pacifism implements are freely adopted. According to King, if Luthuli identified himself as an 'ideological pacifist', he would be uninformed, naïve and even oblivious to reality as pacifist strategies are blinded, not contextually implemented and serve as a panacea. By proclaiming himself a 'realist', Luthuli denied being a pacifist. As a 'strategic pacifist', Luthuli comprehended the full-dimensions of the struggle he led and chose freely the strategy to adopt. Luthuli chose pacifist methods, being fully cognisant of the forces arrayed against him and the ramifications of any actions taken. Luthuli, like King, denied being a pacifist, yet chose to implement its tenets. King discerned that pacifists failed to possess a realistic understanding of human nature. When Luthuli declared that he was a

⁹² Martin Luther King, Jr. *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Chapter three, "Crozer Seminary". Found at: http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/autobiography/chp_3.htm, accessed 18 August 2008.

Also found in:

"We Shall Overcome," author and publication unknown, 205-6.

⁹³ An "ideological pacifist" is a 'pacifist' as defined earlier in the introduction. A 'strategic pacifist' is not a pacifist, but who believes that in a given situation, pacifist methods are the most efficacious.

realist, not a pacifist, he proclaimed the South African context warranted pacifist methods and that the extent of National Party's intransigence did not elude him.

George Houser and the American Committee on Africa

Secondary sources make much of Luthuli's cooperation with Martin Luther King, Jr. Primary resources reveal that the relationship and communication between the two was less substantive than what is often conveyed. In fact, there is no archival evidence that suggests that Luthuli and King ever directly communicated. Still, both were co-sponsors of the "Appeal for Action against Apartheid", issued by the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) on 10 December 1962.⁹⁴

The content of the "Appeal for Action against Apartheid" and the convictions of those with whom Luthuli cooperated testify to the heavy investment he placed in non-violent tactics. The "Appeal for Action" statement was the result of many years of cooperation and partnership between Mary-Louise Hooper (a Quaker who served as Luthuli's secretary and staff member of ACOA), George Houser, (a pacifist and founder and Executive Secretary of ACOA), South African clerics such as de Blank, Reeves (who served ACOA as international sponsors) and Martin Luther King, Jr. These unique associations affirmed Luthuli's reluctance to ever separate himself from non-violent strategies.

The ties that bound Luthuli to other kindred spirits, spiritually motivated, were not easily broken. Luthuli and Houser first met in 1954 and since at least 1956 the two maintained regular correspondence.⁹⁵ Born to Methodist missionary parents, Houser was imprisoned for a year in 1940 for protesting mandatory registration for the United States military draft. After receiving ministerial training at the Chicago Theological Seminary, Houser founded in 1942 an organisation that pursued non-violent direct action against racial segregation. In 1953, Houser founded ACOA to support anti-colonial struggles

⁹⁴ King Encyclopedia, "American Committee on Africa (ACOA)", www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/americancommitteeonafrika.html, accessed 13 June 2008.

⁹⁵ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel # 2, correspondence from Luthuli to George Houser, 08 June 1956.

throughout Africa and to assist in the abolishment of Apartheid in South Africa. By 1957, Houser had been declared a “prohibited immigrant” in the British territories of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Tanganyika (Tanzania), Uganda and Kenya.⁹⁶

Primarily working through Mahomed as an intermediary, Houser and Luthuli corresponded in 1956, discussing means by which ACOA would assist the ANC to print its own publication by utilising a press in Phoenix administered by M. K. Gandhi’s grandson.⁹⁷ In 1958 and 1959, Luthuli and Houser’s correspondences focused upon efforts being made by ACOA to raise funds to defend those charged in the Treason Trial through the Africa Defence Fund for which Houser requested Luthuli to serve as Advisor.⁹⁸ In 1960, Luthuli and Houser (with Paton and the Bishop of Johannesburg) cooperated in the establishment of the South African Committee for Higher Education that assisted disadvantaged students with domestic and international scholarships.⁹⁹ Cooperation continued into 1961 as ACOA sponsored events to celebrate Africa Freedom Day on an annual basis.¹⁰⁰ In October and November 1961, Luthuli received correspondence from Houser inviting Luthuli to speak in the United States as part of his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance tour. Luthuli reluctantly informed Houser that his banning restrictions and the inability to receive a passport would not permit him to accept.¹⁰¹

In February 1962, Houser introduced Luthuli to ACOA’s “Appeal for Action” campaign that was intended to be a follow-up to the 1957 “Declaration of Conscience”.¹⁰² Houser envisioned that King, Luthuli and Eleanor Roosevelt would be the three sponsors. Apparently, nothing more was required from the sponsors than their appellation on the

⁹⁶ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 9, correspondence from George Houser to Luthuli, 14 August 1957.

⁹⁷ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP 2914, Reel # 2, correspondence from Luthuli to George Houser, 08 June 1956.

Luthuli mentioned Rev. Dr. Arthur Blaxall who served as an intermediary between Luthuli and Tambo.

⁹⁸ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 12, correspondence from George Houser to Luthuli, 03 December 1958.

ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 14, correspondence from George Houser to Luthuli, 12 November 1959.

⁹⁹ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folders 14 and 15, correspondence from the President of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), John Shingler and George Houser and enclosure, 19 April 1960.

¹⁰⁰ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 18, correspondence to Luthuli from George Houser, 22 March 1961.

ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 13, correspondence from George Houser to Luthuli, 20 March 1959.

¹⁰¹ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 19, correspondence from Luthuli to George Houser, 22 November 1961.

¹⁰² ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 10, correspondence from George Houser to Luthuli, 14 October 1957.

More than one hundred leaders from every continent issued the 1957 Declaration of Conscience. The Declaration sought to appeal to South Africa to bring its policies into line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

invitation requesting international figures to sign the Appeal.¹⁰³ What is significant to note and what underscores the importance of Luthuli's relationship with Houser is the substance of a correspondence to Americans from Luthuli through the cooperation of ACOA. In the wake of the Sabotage Act that stifled domestic advocacy efforts, Luthuli deduced that strict adherence to non-violent methods was the key to international solidarity and thus liberation. Luthuli wrote:

And now – under the new “Sabotage” Act – to challenge segregation is to risk the death penalty. Under such conditions, it is not too much to say that twelve million of my people look to you. For we cannot win equality without the help of the outside world (Luthuli's emphasis).¹⁰⁴

Herein, Luthuli stated clearly (contrary to pan-Africanist thinking that Mandela desired to lean towards, if only in perception) that Blacks cannot win liberation without the support of global public opinion that is primarily generated by white, Christian and liberal advocates of human rights. Furthermore, such a constituency inextricably bound Luthuli to non-violent methods. Luthuli's correspondence with Americans further stresses Luthuli's opposition to the ANC policy permitting the use of violence. In this correspondence, Luthuli specifically identified a feared “cataclysm” that justified his stance. Luthuli pleaded in December 1962:

APPEAL FOR ACTION AGAINST APARTHIED is projected to bring pressure on South Africa on an international scale – pressure for change before it is too late...before we are caught in a bloody revolt which would necessarily polarise along racial lines and blot out all hope of justice in South Africa. Such a cataclysm would destroy our movement here; it would endanger hard-won progress everywhere, including America. That is why Martin Luther King joins me as an initiating sponsor for this Appeal for Action...As you write your check, I am sure you will make a sacrifice – not for the recognition accorded by the Nobel Prize, but for the

¹⁰³ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 20, correspondence from George Houser to Luthuli, 07 February 1962.
ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 20, correspondence from George Houser to Luthuli, 17 July 1962.
ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 20, correspondence from George Houser to Luthuli, 09 October 1962.
ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 20, correspondence from George Houser to Ebrahim Mahomed for Luthuli, 15 November 1962.

¹⁰⁴ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 20, correspondence from Luthuli to various international leaders, September 1962.

cause we share: that interracial amity shall not perish (Luthuli's emphases).¹⁰⁵

The actual Appeal issued jointly by Luthuli and King is even more explicit in its advocacy of non-violent methods. Luthuli and King presented two possibilities for the future in their Appeal. The first possibility was that government intransigence would lead to a possible liberation brought about by violence and armed rebellion. The second possibility was that a transition to a society based upon equality for all without regard to colour would be brought about by a global quarantine of the Apartheid South Africa. What is most significant about the first choice is that the authors stated that violence and armed rebellion would result "once it is clear that peaceful adjustments are no longer possible".¹⁰⁶ Luthuli and King considered non-violent options to still be viable at the time of writing, although to a decreasing degree. Luthuli and King articulated their fear that "large scale violence would take the form of a racial war".¹⁰⁷ Such a supposed liberation may be successful. But, at what cost? "Mass racial extermination will destroy the potential for interracial unity in South Africa and elsewhere".¹⁰⁸ Mandela reluctantly risked such a scenario. Luthuli could not. The government also would not risk such a scenario and quickly extinguished Mandela's 'army'.

Luthuli perceived that effective international sanctions supporting *the* non-violent method were still viable. These would provide the ANC the public support and moral high ground in their appeal to Christians and the international human rights advocates. Mandela's launch of *MK* and succour from Communist countries during the Cold War quickly evaporated much of the ANC's international solidarity with western governments that represented predominately Christian and democratic nations. As long as western governments perceived, rightly or wrongly, the ANC to be a proxy of the Soviet Union that sought to overthrow an anti-Communist regime, the liberation movement's efforts to institute effective sanctions were always doomed to fail until the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s. As early as 1956, western allies such as Mary-Louise Hooper

¹⁰⁵ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 20, correspondence from Luthuli to various international leaders, September 1962.

¹⁰⁶ ANC, "Appeal for Action against Apartheid", Luthuli and King, 10 December 1962.

¹⁰⁷ ANC, "Appeal for Action against Apartheid", Luthuli and King, 10 December 1962.

¹⁰⁸ ANC, "Appeal for Action against Apartheid", Luthuli and King, 10 December 1962.

expressed disquiet to Luthuli about the ANC's cooperation with Communists and Houser's communication with Paton also suggests his anxiety over ANC Communist influences.¹⁰⁹ The eruption of violence would surely wound efforts to mobilise international support for the liberation movement by pacifists such as Hooper and Houser. Luthuli's strategy with ACOA would not work with Mandela implementing violence.

In September 1963, Luthuli received a request from Houser to offer a few words in support of ACOA on the occasion of its 10th Anniversary.¹¹⁰ Luthuli's greeting to ACOA affirmed his deep respect and admiration for the organisation.

We are partners with you in your mission, and I could assure you in the name of my people that when our day of deliverance comes, you will most assuredly not find us wanting in the responsibility which the forging of a suitable government acceptable to all ranks of our multi-racial population will entail. Long live the American Committee on Africa! And may Africa always live up to the trust that you have reposed on her!! (Luthuli's exclamation)¹¹¹

King's support, though not direct with Luthuli, of the anti-Apartheid movement continued through the auspices of ACOA. Like Luthuli, King was also not a pacifist, also declaring so categorically. Nevertheless, King continued to advocate for non-violent tactics to further the cause of human rights in the United States and South Africa. In December 1962, in consultation with Houser, King and other African-American leaders met with President John Kennedy to discuss United States foreign policy concerning Africa. On 10 December 1965 at a Human Rights Day rally organised by Houser, King pronounced that continued United States' economic support of South Africa amounted to

¹⁰⁹ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 12, correspondence from Alan Paton to George Houser, 21 December 1956.

After discussing to what degree Communists within the ANC exerted too much influence, Paton conveyed to Houser, "We in the Liberal Party have taken a leading part in the setting up of the Defence Fund. If you felt, after all the above caveats, that you could help – and while I loathe communism I do feel that help is needed and is justified – send anything you can..."

UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, correspondence from Luthuli to Mary-Louise Hooper, 02 July 1956.

¹¹⁰ ARC, ACA, Box 100, Folder 22, correspondence to Luthuli from George Houser, 06 September 1963.

¹¹¹ ARC, ACA, Box unknown, Folder unknown, "10th Anniversary of the American Committee on Africa", by Albert Luthuli, n.d.

a “shame” for the nation and called for an economic boycott of South African goods as a demonstration of the “international potential of non-violence”.¹¹²

Rivonia and Ngakane Trials

On 26 July 1962, Mandela travelled to Natal to meet with Luthuli and members of the Natal *MK* Regional Command. In this meeting with Luthuli, Mandela advised that the ANC should be seen as dominant within the Congress Alliance to appease potential Africanist allies throughout the continent. Luthuli disagreed and said, as he characteristically did, he would deliberate on the matter further by consulting others. On 05 August, while leaving Natal, police arrested Mandela outside Howick, near Pietermaritzburg. The following day, the police charged Mandela with incitement (May 1961 strike) and leaving South Africa illegally (January 1962 North, East and West Africa trip). After first being held during trial at the ‘Johannesburg Fort’, and later incarcerated in Pretoria Central Prison following the imposition of a three year sentence, the authorities transferred Mandela to Robben Island in May 1963. By mid-July Mandela joined his other *MK* co-conspirators in Pretoria to stand trial for High Treason in what is known as the Rivonia Trial.¹¹³ In July, the police raided the alleged *MK* headquarters in Rivonia and discovered Mandela’s diary written during his Africa tour and a document entitled “Operation Mayibuye”, a plan for the launch of a guerrilla war.¹¹⁴ The latter document contained sufficient evidence to convict those tried for treason that carried with it a possible death sentence.

¹¹² King Encyclopedia, “Houser, George Mills”, found at: www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/houser_george.html, accessed 13 June 2008. King Encyclopedia, “American Committee on Africa (ACOA)”.

¹¹³ The other defendants were Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Bob Hepple, Denis Goldberg and Lionel Bernstein. Later police arrested Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni. Four escaped, one agreed to testify for the prosecution (Hepple) and the court found one not guilty (Bernstein).

¹¹⁴ The South African Communist Party owned the “Lilliesleaf” farm at which the state alleged *MK* to be headquartered.

The drama of the Rivonia Trial need not be recounted in this study. Many other scholars in countless publications adequately described the Trial's events and their historical significance and provide the accused's testimony from court transcripts.¹¹⁵ In brief, as R. Johnson wrote, the Trial "exposed the bitter truth: the opposition [to Apartheid] was slipshod, amateur and ineffectual".¹¹⁶ This study instead focuses on Luthuli's public statements in reaction to the Rivonia Trial and the sentencing of those convicted.

The "No one can blame..." statement is perhaps most frequently cited by those who wish to remember Luthuli as a supporter of the use of violence. Chapter three of this study reviews in detail Luthuli's statement in reaction to the Rivonia Trial convictions to resolve that while he expressed solidarity with the accused, he did not support their methods. Further evidence for this thesis exists within a correspondence Luthuli wrote to the General Secretary of the United Nations, 'Pantanaw U' Thant, in June 1964 during the Rivonia Trial prior to sentencing. In this correspondence, Luthuli made it clear that he still held that there was hope for a non-violent solution for South Africa and that he relied on the support of the international community to place substantive external pressure on the Apartheid regime. Luthuli begged:

I write to you most urgently today to stress that whatever hope there still remains for a negotiated and peaceful settlement of the South African crisis, will be lost, possibly for all time, if the United Nations does not act promptly and with firmness on the vital matter which has moved me to make this urgent appeal...[The imposition of the death penalty on the Rivonia accused] would have disastrous results for any prospects of a peaceful settlement of the South African situation and could set in motion a chain of actions and counter-actions which would be tragic for everyone in South Africa as they would be difficult to contain.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Nelson Mandela, *The Struggle Is My Life: His Speeches and Writings 1944-1990* (Bellville, Mayibuye Books, 1994), 161-83.

Clingman, *Bram Fischer*, 299-322.

Meer, *Higher Than Hope*, 161-97.

¹¹⁶ Johnson, *South Africa*, 157.

¹¹⁷ ANC, correspondence from Luthuli to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant, 09 March 1964. Found at: www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/lutuli/let640309.html, accessed 25 June 2008.

In the statement, Luthuli could not lie and claim he did not understand or sympathise with the convicted nor could he in an act of solidarity and plea for mercy tell the complete truth and state that he disagreed with the path they chose. Hence, Luthuli's affirmation that he and the ANC never abandoned non-violent methods, though in July 1961 he chaired and yielded to its and its partners' decision to form a 'separate organisation' that would be prepared to use violence should no option be left available. In the statement, Luthuli maintained support, but not agreement, with those convicted. Luthuli did not as an individual or as the ANC President-General ever advocate or justify violence prior to or after the 1961 decision and did not agree with the path chosen by the convicted despite sympathising with them and understanding their frustration with the National Party regime's perpetually intractable behaviour. The statement is the epitome of balanced and reasoned diplomacy. However, confusing, and therefore a mystery, is Luthuli's May 1961 declarations in the *Post* that the path of violence is the "evil road" and his view that the avoidance of violence is a sign of "civilisation" and "moral superiority" coupled with his Rivonia statement wherein he held that those convicted "represent the highest in morality and ethics in the South African political struggle".¹¹⁸

Some sources indicated that the state had sufficient evidence to arrest and presumably convict Luthuli.¹¹⁹ This claim is unfounded. If the state had evidence to indict and convict Luthuli on charges of treason, it would have done so. While it tried, the prosecution failed in its attempt to draw Luthuli into the Rivonia Trial.¹²⁰ Reminiscent of the Treason Trial, sufficient evidence could not be presented by the state that indicated Luthuli had ever supported the use of violence. Evidence from one of the prosecution's own witnesses must have dissuaded the prosecution from proceeding, convinced that there existed no sound case against Luthuli. Also, the state dared not try Luthuli, thus putting him on the stand or having the defence present countless evidences of his non-violent position. Mandela's diaries, PAFMECSA speech and testimony

¹¹⁸ The explanation may lie within the fact that one comment was made in May 1961 (when acts of violence were less prominent) and the other much later in 1964 (when other organisations had for some time conducted attacks that could be more closely associated, correctly or incorrectly, with 'terrorism'). Another explanation may simply be Luthuli self-confessed disposition that 'affords a charitable interpretation' to people's characters until they prove irredeemably otherwise.

¹¹⁹ Mtolo, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, 191.

¹²⁰ Johnson, *South Africa*, 157.

allowed the state to claim the moral high ground to a credulous white South African public whereas Luthuli's moderate and persuasive position would place the ANC on the moral high ground.

During the Rivonia Trial, the most damaging testimony of the accused's guilt came from the state's star witness, Bruno Mtolo, known during the trial as "Mr. X". Tom Lodge's biography, *Mandela: A Critical Life*, quoted the accused's attorney, Joel Joffe, describing Mtolo as a "recidivist criminal" and an "'old hand' in the witness box whose testimony was a 'skilfully 'interwoven mixture of fact and fiction'".¹²¹ Nevertheless, Mtolo's testimony about Luthuli's waning influence is truthful.

"There was a slight but definite swing from the leadership of Chief Luthuli towards Mandela". The shift "was brought about with great care by members of Communist cells", Mtolo maintained. It was observable in the replacement of the songs sung at meetings about Luthuli by new songs, composed about Mandela.¹²²

In February 1964, the South African government detained Pascal Ngakane, Albertinah Luthuli's husband and thus Luthuli's son-in-law, under the Transkei Emergency Regulations. These Regulations allowed him to be held indefinitely without being charged and without access to legal advice. Ngakane was last seen on 19 February. Fifteen days later, it became known that the police had arrested him.¹²³ In July 1964, the state charged and tried Ngakane of four counts of violating the Sabotage Act and Suppression of Communism Act (for belonging to and furthering the aims of the ANC), departing from the Republic and defeating the ends of justice. During Ngakane's trial, another state witness, also known as "Mr. X", presented evidence that Luthuli opposed MK's operations and even offered to resign from the ANC. Mr. X's testimony, to some degree, is questionable as he allowed himself to be used as a witness for the state against those with whom he formerly served. The veracity of Mr. X's testimony is especially questionable if it agreed with the state's desired portrayal of Luthuli as a leader of an

¹²¹ Lodge, *Mandela*, 110. See endnote 21, chapter 5, 241. Lodge cited: Joel Joffe, *The Rivonia Story* (Bellville: Mayibuye Books and the University of the Western Cape, 1995), 92.

¹²² Lodge, *Mandela*, 111. See endnote 22, chapter 5, 241. Lodge cited: Mtolo, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, 39-40.

¹²³ *London Times*, "Luthuli Son-In-Law Detained", 14 March 1963, 7a.

armed revolutionary movement. Evidence from a questionable witness is usually probative if it in some way contradicts the state's case as Mr. X's did.

In his testimony against Ngakane, Mr. X testified that he first heard of *MK* in 1962. In his evidence...

[Mr. X] referred to a report made at an ANC meeting by M. B. Yengwa in March that year [1962]. Yengwa had told the meeting that Lutuli had been complaining about reports concerning the ANC and *Mkhonto we Sizwe*. He felt that if the ANC was to resort to violence then it was time for him to resign.¹²⁴

In the March ANC meeting at which both Yengwa and Ngakane were present, Mr. X testified that it was unanimously decided not to associate with *MK*. Mr. X then testified that after the meeting, Yengwa told him:

Lutuli wanted to resign from the ANC as "he did not want to be a stumbling block to those who wanted to use violence".¹²⁵

Though Mr. X's testimony may be seen as suspect given the fact that he gave evidence for the state, nothing in the archival record contradicts the assertion that Lutuli offered to resign from the ANC. Mr. X's testimony in Ngakane's trial and other archival evidence leads to a conclusion that as a result of Lutuli's objections to violence, he reluctantly yielded to others' convictions for its required use while continuing to advocate for non-violent methods.

Family of Man Award

Late in his life, Lutuli continued to receive accolades and successfully maintain the close ties with sympathetic Whites allied to the ANC's struggle in large part because he did not renounce the non-violent path and was never heard to support the initiation of

¹²⁴ Publication unknown, "Lutuli Was Stumbling Block to Violence, Witness Says", 22 July 1964.

¹²⁵ Publication unknown, "Lutuli Was Stumbling Block to Violence, Witness Says", 22 July 1964. *Newscheck* reported "[Lutuli's] role in the subsequent violence of 1962/1964 was never fixed. He never condemned that violence outright, though he was reported to have considered disassociating himself from the ANC".

Newscheck, "An Unfulfilled Life", 28 July 1967, 10.

violence. The acceptance of the Gell, Nobel and Family of Man awards displays the degree to which Luthuli embedded himself with the liberal cause that assumed only non-violent tactics to be permissible and thus failed to ever distance himself from the ANC's similar historic stance.

In 1964 Luthuli received at his home in the Umvoti mission a telegram from an event organiser, the Honourable John Whitney, who congratulated him for being awarded the New York City Protestant Council's Family of Man Award and inviting him to receive it on 28 October 1964 at the Astor Hotel in Manhattan.¹²⁶ The Protestant Council led by its President, Arthur Kinsolving, and the Society for the Family of Man led by its Chairman, Wheelock Bingham, jointly sponsored the occasion and award.¹²⁷ Luthuli's honour was not insignificant. The Guest of Honour at the 1963 award ceremony was United States President John Kennedy. The scheduled Guest of Honour at the 1964 ceremony was former President Dwight Eisenhower.¹²⁸ The Council and Society bestowed four awards: Human Relations, World Peace, Education and Communications. Luthuli received the award for Human Relations that included a US\$ 5,000.00 grant.¹²⁹ The Society honoured Luthuli specifically for his advocacy of non-violent methods declaring that he was...

...leading the fight against the Apartheid policy of the South African government always advocating firm and continued opposition by non-violent means.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, telegram to Luthuli from the Chairman of the Protestant Council Family of Man Award Dinner, the Honourable John Whitney, n.d. Wheelock Bingham sent another telegram.

UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47 CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, telegram to Luthuli from Wheelock Bingham, n.d.

Another telegram was also sent to Howard Trumball through the auspices of the American Board to Beatrice Street.

UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47 CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, telegram to Luthuli from Wheelock Bingham, 17 October 1964.

¹²⁷ The Protestant Council represented 1,700 Protestant churches in the New York metropolitan area.

¹²⁸ President Eisenhower's son, Colonel John Eisenhower, served as the Guest of Honour due to his father's absence.

¹²⁹ This is a substantial sum of money for the time and for Luthuli. How or if Luthuli spent this money I do not know.

Publication unknown, "Lutuli Gets Grant", 29 October 1964.

¹³⁰ Publication unknown, "Big Cash Award for Lutuli", 18 October 1964.

As with the Nobel award, it is highly improbable that Luthuli would have considered receiving the Family of Man award if he had at any time advocated or countenanced violence. On 17 October, Luthuli posted two letters, one to the local magistrate in Stanger and one to the Minister of Justice in Pretoria, requesting permission to attend.¹³¹ For Luthuli to receive the award in person, he would have to depart by 26 October.¹³² Luthuli's attendance seemed remote. He would be required to obtain travel bookings, income tax clearance, passport photos and a passport from Pretoria, all while being confined to Groutville and thus banned from Stanger and Durban. Luthuli would first need to obtain blanket permission to break his banning restrictions.

In documents stamped "Secret", the South African embassy in Washington, D.C. advised the Secretary of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria on 14 October 1964 that:

While Society is ostensibly non-political[, the] decision to honour Luthuli may reflect a desire in certain chiefly Methodist and Presbyterian quarters in New York to make political mischief for South Africa. You will no doubt bear in mind that UN and other hostile groups will seize on Luthuli should he come to New York. We assume passports if applied for will not be granted.¹³³

Needless to say, Luthuli could not and did not attend.

John Reuling wrote to Luthuli in early November informing him that the organisers of the award received at the ceremony his expression of appreciation. Reuling also wrote that an Adams alumnus, Mphiwa Mbatha, received the award and spoke briefly on Luthuli's behalf.¹³⁴ The same correspondence discussed means by which the American Board could facilitate the transfer of the grant money from New York to Durban on Luthuli's behalf.

¹³¹ UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, correspondence from Luthuli to the Stanger Magistrate, 17 October 1964.

UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, correspondence from Luthuli to the Secretary of Justice, 17 October 1964.

¹³² UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, correspondence from Luthuli to the Secretary of Justice, 17 October 1964.

¹³³ National Archives Repository, Pretoria, File 100/6/704, S. A. Embassy, Washington, Telegram, No. 140, to Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, "Secret: 1964 Society of Man Award", 15 October 1964, 2.

¹³⁴ UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Reel #1, correspondence to Luthuli from the John Reuling, 02 September 1964.

American Board links with Luthuli continued in late 1964 and confirm the central theses of this study that he possessed a diminished influence within the ANC and continued to neither support nor condemn the turn to violence. One American Board missionary, Edward Hawley, met Oliver Tambo in Dar es Salaam in November of 1964 and for him carried a typed, unaddressed and unsigned correspondence to Luthuli in Groutville. Hawley's visit was facilitated by American Board missionary Howard Trumbull and the local Congregational minister in Groutville. In an interview, Hawley confided the following discussion with Luthuli.

Luthuli talked freely about his experiences under the banning orders and explained that this current one had banned him from going to church... One of the most moving parts of that conversation came when I asked him about how he dealt with the increasing pressure to use force in combating Apartheid. His response was, and I can remember this almost verbatim, 'I have never been a violent man. And I could never be one... The young men still come out to see me. When they tell me that non-violence has always been met by violence, I have no words left'. It was clear to me that he still wished that justice might be obtained non-violently. But, he no longer could find arguments to convince them that this was possible.¹³⁵

Swedish Links

The South African government prohibited Luthuli from accepting an invitation to Sweden as well as to the United States. Concerned about reports of Luthuli's deteriorating health, Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs to South Africa, Hugo Tamm, visited Luthuli at his home in Groutville in early 1965.¹³⁶ Alarmed by a report that the South Africa's security police questioned Luthuli about this visit, the Stockholm branch of the ruling Social Democratic Party invited him to Sweden to speak at May Day demonstrations in Stockholm, making the invitation through the South African

¹³⁵ Interview with Edward Hawley, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 29 June 2009.

¹³⁶ These reports likely emanated from Mary-Louise Hooper of the ACOA who told the United Nation's General Assembly Special Committee against Apartheid that Luthuli's health was deteriorating and the government prohibited him to be seen by a doctor. The South African government rightly denied this claim, indicating that "any doctor, except one who is a 'named Communist' or one who is himself subject to an order restricting his movements, could be summoned by Mr. Lutuli".

ANC, "Chief Lutuli and the United Nations: "Statement by Mrs. Mary-Louise Hooper at the Forty-Fifth Meeting of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid", Annex III, 29 October 1964. Publication unknown, "'No Medical Care' Allegation Denied", 31 October 1964.

government. As the South African envoy to Sweden, Anthony Hamilton denied Luthuli the opportunity to travel to Sweden in an abrasive reply. Hamilton retorted that despite restrictions placed upon him, Luthuli...

...continued meeting with Communists and well-known agitators, both openly and in secret. He abused the privileges accorded to him and defied and provoked the authorities and the government at every turn. Mr. Luthuli has therefore only himself to blame for the restrictions and prohibitions still imposed upon him. These are unavoidable if all the peoples of South Africa are to be protected against the violence which would accompany a Communist-inspired coup d'état. The restrictions on Mr. Luthuli have been imposed only as a last resort...In the past, when passport facilities were granted to Mr. Luthuli, the promises he gave were not fulfilled. Since his last visit abroad [to accept the Nobel Peace Prize] there has been no change in his attitude. In the circumstances, the South African government cannot, therefore, allow Mr. Luthuli to undertake the proposed visit.¹³⁷

Despite the banning of the ANC, the legislation of the Sabotage Act, the imprisonment of many of the liberation struggle leaders after the Rivonia Trial and the exile of other ANC leaders, the outside world's contact with Luthuli continued on a limited basis. Though such contact continued, the South African government struggled hard to affect Luthuli's 'civil death'. Contrary to the ANC nationalists' inference that Luthuli continued to lead the liberation movement by having secret meetings in cane fields, Sellström emphasised that banning restrictions made communication with Luthuli almost impossible.¹³⁸ Often ecclesiastic, rather than political, links facilitated what limited contact Luthuli had with the outside world.¹³⁹ Sellström related in an interview that Ronnie Kasrils often contacted the Swedish legation in Pretoria. They then established contact with Luthuli through the Church of Sweden Mission in order to hear

¹³⁷ Correspondence from the South African Minister A. M. Hamilton to the Secretary, Stockholms Arbetarekommun, Stockholm, 03 June 1965. Cited by Sellström: Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, 1: 239.

¹³⁸ I do not imply that Luthuli and members of the ANC did not hold meetings in the cane fields as nationalist histories so often claim. Rather, I contend that the ANC aggrandises the purpose and significance of the meetings as they relate to the degree to which the ANC consulted Luthuli on all (including military) matters and the degree to which he still led the movement.

¹³⁹ Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, 1: 239.

news about him and publish that information on behalf of the ANC.¹⁴⁰ Even at the October 1962 Lobatse conference, where this study asserts the ANC ‘officially’ decided that MK be affiliated with the ANC, the ANC received no information about Luthuli, let alone leadership. In addition, judging by Luthuli’s Rivonia Statement, Luthuli was not even informed that the ANC officially changed its policy in Lobatse.¹⁴¹ Such tenuous links with the ANC divulge that though Luthuli held the position of President-General, the position held only titular status with the ANC in exile. Elaine Reinertsen also discerned a larger thesis of this study “that by 1960 the authority of the President-General had diminished to a figurehead”; Reinertsen’s statement that Luthuli “did not, and indeed would not, as a recipient of the Peace Prize, echo the sentiments of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*” provides “the strongest evidence of the declining role of the President-General”.¹⁴²

Robert Kennedy’s Visit

Only Luthuli’s Nobel Peace Prize surpassed the degree to which the four day visit to South Africa of Senator Robert Kennedy, brother of the recently slain United States President, embarrassed the Apartheid regime. Commenting on Kennedy’s June 1966 visit, the *Rand Daily Mail* judged:

Senator Robert Kennedy’s visit is the best thing that has happened to South Africa for years. It is as if a window has been flung open and a gust of fresh air has swept into a room in which the atmosphere had become stale and foetid. Suddenly it is possible to breathe again without feeling choked.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Tor Sellström, Luthuli Museum, Kwadukuza, 27 June 2008.

Spotlight, No. 29, 1965. As cited by Sellström:

Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, 1: 243.

¹⁴¹ The ANC issued its first printed statement connecting MK to the ANC in April 1963. The statement arose from the Lobatse Conference. In the statement, the ANC claimed the military wing and violence as a tactic (beyond sabotage) and emphasised the importance and primacy of political mass action. Nonetheless, I still assert that the statement contradicts Luthuli’s claim in the June 1964 Rivonia Statement that “The ANC never abandoned its method of a militant, non-violent struggle...” The ANC and/or Luthuli can not claim to prosecute a non-violent struggle and prosecute an armed struggle simultaneously. By pursuing the latter, the former claim is negated.

SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 1: 135.

¹⁴² Reinertsen, “Umkhonto we Sizwe”, 13 and 12, respectively.

¹⁴³ *Rand Daily Mail*, “Kennedy, Come Back”, by the Editor-In-Chief, 09 June 1966.

During a whirlwind trip from 04 June to 09 June, Kennedy electrified the South African press, youth and public. The frazzled press corps that tried to keep pace with Kennedy nicknamed him the “Human Dynamo”. In all of his speeches, Kennedy brilliantly critiqued white South Africa’s racism, materialism, increasing totalitarian leanings and paranoia of Communism by speaking about the successes and mistakes of the American project to realise a ‘more perfect union’. In speaking indirectly to South Africa by speaking directly about the United States, Kennedy gave a stinging evaluation of Apartheid as an abandonment of all that western civilisation holds sacred without the diplomatic fallout that would result in a broadside attack. Advocating “peaceful and non-violent change”, Kennedy’s speeches beautifully captured Luthuli’s philosophical, theological and political understandings.¹⁴⁴

At dawn on the 07th, Kennedy flew via helicopter to Groutville to visit Luthuli. The two met privately for about an hour. During the visit, Luthuli and Kennedy took a stroll down his rural street, listened to speeches of Robert’s brother and former President, John Kennedy, on a record player Kennedy presented Luthuli as a gift and had tea. Rule’s book reported that Luthuli told Kennedy “that he was not a Communist and that he feared despair would drive the black majority in South Africa to violence”.¹⁴⁵ Flying back to Johannesburg, Kennedy gave a press conference over the Valley of a Thousand Hills wherein he described Luthuli as “one of the most impressive men I have ever met”.¹⁴⁶ The *Rand Daily Mail* appropriately summarised the significance of the visit to Luthuli:

Think, also, what this visit has meant to the non-Whites of South Africa – his acceptance of them as people who count as much as anyone else, as people to be greeted and sought out and talked to as friends. In this sense his meeting with ex-Chief Albert Luthuli was not merely a valuable personal contact but a symbol of recognition of the African people as part of our community.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCP 4144, 323.168 ROB, “Robert Kennedy in South Africa”, a souvenir booklet of Senator Kennedy’s 1966 tour of South Africa compiled by the Rand Corporation, 1966, “Day of Affirmation Speech”, 06 June 1966, University of Cape Town, 7.

¹⁴⁵ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 137.

¹⁴⁶ UKZN, KCAL, CC, KCP 4144, 323.168 ROB, “Robert Kennedy in South Africa”, “And He’s Off Again”, 4.

¹⁴⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*, “Kennedy, Come Back”, by the Editor-In-Chief, 09 June 1966.

Kennedy's tour provides evidence that liberalism was alive and well in South Africa, the black majority had a strong ally in Washington, D.C. and that Luthuli feared the eruption of a violent conflict. Also worthy of note in this study is Kennedy's comment that he noticed "the Chief seemed thin".¹⁴⁸

Luthuli's Health

Prior to the 24 May 1964 expiration of Luthuli's five year banning order, a close confidant of his told Dennis Royle, a *Natal Witness* reporter:

Luthuli's way of life has recently undergone a complete change. The 66-year-old former Zulu Chief (he gave up his chieftainship when he went into politics) is no longer a bustling politician but a quiet retiring farmer...Luthuli who can not talk for publication, is still dedicated to the concept of a multi-racial society gained by non-violent means. But his banning from public life offers him little chance of furthering these aims.¹⁴⁹

Effective 31 May 1964, the Minister of Justice, B. J. Vorster, imposed on Luthuli an even more severe banning than the one he received in 1959. Unlike his 1959 banning, the new one would have prevented Luthuli from even travelling to the next closest town, Stanger, until 31 May 1969 had he not died before. The Minister of Justice felt confident that Luthuli's activities furthered the cause of Communism and warned him not to publish any statements, address any meetings or make contact with any banned people.¹⁵⁰ The Liberal Party, NUSAS and the International Confederation of Free Trades Unions all publicly protested Luthuli's banning.¹⁵¹

Evidence suggests that Luthuli's political and physical life were winding down considerably. From October 1964 until his death in July 1967, thirty-three months, the

¹⁴⁸ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 137.

¹⁴⁹ *Natal Witness*, "Albert Luthuli: 'Africa's Forgotten Man...'", by Dennis Royle, 01 May 1964.

¹⁵⁰ Publication unknown, "Stricter Ban on Lutuli: May Not Enter Stanger", 23 May 1964.

¹⁵¹ *Daily News*, "Comment on Re-Imposed Lutuli Ban", 26 May 1964.

Daily News, "Restrictions on Lutuli Condemned", 06 July 1964.

Daily News, "Lutuli Order Expires in May, 1969", 20 June 1964.

only known archival materials produced by Luthuli's hand are sermon notes and some medical reminders on scraps of paper. The Luthuli Papers include the last known archival documents that Luthuli produced during his final year of life. Unfortunately, other than one correspondence and one declaration of congratulations, the 'documents' are actually scraps of paper on which Luthuli scratched notes.¹⁵² The notes reveal that the last six months of Luthuli's life were perhaps insular and almost exclusively focused on religious matters. Dates of services, scripture readings and notes on sermons that Luthuli listened to over the radio comprised the bulk of his written attention. Notes not related to religious matters were reminders of dates and times for medical appointments. The scribbles on various scraps of paper, magazine articles and even product advertisements or labels are dated 08 January, 22 January, 05 February, 16 February, 26 February, 03 March and 05 March 1967.¹⁵³ For example, scripture readings are found inscribed upon a *Forward Africa* newsletter that affirmed in its official motto that "the peaceful elimination of colonialism – in all its forms and wherever it may be found – is essential to a free world".¹⁵⁴ By no means can a conclusion be based solely on these jottings; nonetheless, it appears that Luthuli's mental state deteriorated. The latter writings can scarcely be deciphered.

Luthuli's deteriorating penmanship and the lack of any archival records during his last two years of life bring into serious doubt that Luthuli was active as the President-General of the ANC or posed a political threat to the government. Other than the 1967 scraps of paper and sermon notes just mentioned, the Papers contain Luthuli's last written

¹⁵² UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, typed "circular" correspondence from Luthuli to "Whom It May Concern" regarding the introduction of and recommendation for Miss Muriel Horrell of the South African Institute of Race Relations, 12 February 1964.

UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, handwritten draft of congratulations to the newly independent nation of Zambia entitled "The Government and the People of Zambia, 23 October 1964.

UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, "notebooks (dealing with church services and sermons)", 1965-1967. Quotation from Dorothy Woodson's 1981 indexed inventory.

¹⁵³ UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, "envelopes with scribbled notes; scraps of paper, scattered thoughts, reminders, etc...", 1966. Quotation from Dorothy Woodson's 1981 indexed inventory.

¹⁵⁴ Ronald Cohen, "Nigerian Nationhood Is Endangered", *Toward Freedom* 15, no. 10, November 1966, 1. Found in:

UCT, LC, MAD, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Reel # 1.

document, a note of congratulations to the government and people of Zambia for their newly attained independence written on 23 October 1964.

In her own biography, Nokukhanya confessed that in 1966, Luthuli's health deteriorated.

He was already weak when I returned to Groutville [from the farms in Swaziland] in 1966. And he was very touchy. He got depressed when something went wrong in the house. His feelings had run high because of the treatment he received from the police. They often used to come and take him away from the house, even at that stage. I decided not to go back in 1966 because things had deteriorated so much at home that I needed time to work up the fields and crops.¹⁵⁵

Despite Luthuli's failing health and banning restrictions, he maintained a peaceful spirit that encouraged reconciliation and harmony. In January 1966, McCord Zulu Hospital in Durban admitted Luthuli for hypertension. This hospitalisation likely caused Nokukhanya to decide no longer to work in Swaziland. The American Board Superintendent of the hospital at the time, Howard Christofersen, specifically recalled visiting Luthuli's room to bid him farewell prior to returning to the United States. Christofersen reminisced:

It was there that [Luthuli] quoted Professor Agger who had visited African educational institutions in the early 1920s. "Like the black and white keys on the piano, the Whites need the Blacks and the Blacks need the Whites". That was the first time that I had heard that expression and it stuck by me because it was so impressive that he would say that after the way in which he had been persecuted.¹⁵⁶

On 15 March 1967, only ten days after the last inscribed piece of paper mentioned above, Luthuli signed his Last Will and Testament bequeathing all his immovable property to his wife and all of his children save his first born son, Hugh, who was omitted.¹⁵⁷ The Last Will and Testament appointed Edward Mzoneli, Mordecai Gumede and Eben Ntuli as the executors of Luthuli's will. On 16 March, Luthuli signed a codicil

¹⁵⁵ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 137.

¹⁵⁶ E-mailed correspondence from Dr. Howard Christofersen to me dated 01 August 2008.

¹⁵⁷ KZNA, PAR, Albert John Luthuli File (AJLF), Last Will and Testament, 15 March 1967, 1.

bequeathing a piece of land to his nephew, Norman Luthuli.¹⁵⁸ One can only speculate that those close to Luthuli and/or Luthuli himself began to be aware of a physical decline and hence ensured that the family's attorney prepared a Last Will and Testament *at the same time* Luthuli scribbled his last preserved documents found in the Luthuli Papers. Yet, in oral testimonies, the family has always maintained that Luthuli possessed good health until the time of his death.

The scraps of paper found in the Papers confirm accounts in newspaper articles published in mid-1967 that Luthuli was not able to do much reading or writing and spent most of his time listening to the radio. For example, in April 1967 the *Sunday Times* reported that Luthuli had recently undergone delicate surgery to his left eye at the McCord Zulu Hospital.¹⁵⁹ The eye had troubled him for many years and had been "virtually useless" since Luthuli's stroke "several years ago" in 1955.¹⁶⁰ The eye caused Luthuli considerable constant pain, to such an extent that it was discussed if it should be removed. T. Gcabashe, Luthuli's son-in-law, mentioned that there was a fear that the other eye "may also be affected".¹⁶¹ The medical spokesman at McCord indicated that Luthuli "had not been cured yet and that he would not be 'for a very long time...He has a very nasty eye and that is all I can say'".¹⁶²

Newspaper articles suggest that more than an eye may have troubled Luthuli. McCord Zulu Hospital admitted Luthuli in early March and he did not return home until the week of 15 April.¹⁶³ Luthuli spent as many as four weeks admitted in hospital for eye surgery; this is a very long time for what would normally be a relatively simple procedure. One must suspect that high blood pressure or other complicating health factors prolonged his hospitalisation. The drafting and signing of Luthuli's Last Will and Testament immediately preceding his four week hospitalisation casts doubt on the long held conviction that Luthuli benefited from good health at the time of his death. One of

¹⁵⁸ KZNA, PAR, AJLF, Last Will and Testament, 15 March 1967, 5, codicil.

¹⁵⁹ To receive treatment, Luthuli had to request permission, which was granted for this purpose, to suspend his banning orders.

¹⁶⁰ *Sunday Times*, "Chief Luthuli-In Hospital-May Be Going Blind", 02 April 1967, 2.

¹⁶¹ *Sunday Times*, "Chief Luthuli-In Hospital-May Be Going Blind", 02 April 1967, 2.

¹⁶² *Sunday Times*, "Chief Luthuli-In Hospital-May Be Going Blind", 02 April 1967, 2.

¹⁶³ Publications unknown:

"Lutuli Has an Eye Operation", 28 March 1967; "The Patient: All Lutuli's Visitors Are Screened", 02 April 1967; "Lutuli to Leave Hospital Soon", 03 April 1967; "Mr. Albert Lutuli Is Improving", 06 April 1967; "Lutuli Is Out of Hospital", 15 April 1967; "Lutuli Out of Hospital", 23 April 1967.

the last publicised visits to Luthuli came in July 1967 shortly after a Swedish newspaper interviewed him.¹⁶⁴ Based on this interview, Sellström described Luthuli as “an old and tired man”.¹⁶⁵

‘Mysterious’ Death?

On Wednesday, 19 July 1967, two days before Luthuli’s death, Nokukhanya and her husband walked together from their home in Groutville to the land he rented to cultivate sugar cane. From the fields, Luthuli proceeded to his shop at Gledhow, just a few minutes walk away, while Nokukhanya remained behind. Between the field and shop were two bridges. The members of the community walked across one well-known bridge daily for many decades. The other bridge, slightly to the west (inland), was under construction. During this walk and visit to the field, Nokukhanya told her husband to use the new bridge to cross over the Umvoti River to his shop to the north. Luthuli followed his wife’s suggestion and used the new bridge that day.¹⁶⁶ Approximately one week after her husband’s death, Nokukhanya lamented, “For what reason my late husband crossed over [the old] rail bridge on this occasion when he was struck by a train I do not know”.¹⁶⁷

On Thursday, 20 July, a day before her husband was killed, Nokukhanya had a disagreement with her husband. Many years later in an interview Nokukhanya recalled:

¹⁶⁴ *Aftonbladet*, “De vita gör allt för att knack honom, men lyckas aldrig!” (“The Whites Do Everything to Break Him, But They Never Succeed!”), by Marie-Anne Jansson, 03 July 1967. As cited in: Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, 1: 241.

¹⁶⁵ Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, 1: 241.

¹⁶⁶ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Nokukhanya Luthuli, Inquest Report, Exh. R, sworn testimony, 01 August 1967.

There are discrepancies between Nokukhanya’s recollection of events recorded in Rule’s biography and her sworn statement soon after Luthuli’s death. In Rule’s book, Nokukhanya remembers, “What was amazing about this whole incident was that there was a short cut through the cane fields which he had used on that previous Wednesday. But on the day of his death he decided to use the bridge. He had even remarked that the short cut was better than the long route. I don’t know why he used the bridge”. Here, Nokukhanya made no mention of the new bridge under construction as she does in her 1967 sworn statement. Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 145.

In her 1967 statement and in her interview with Rule, Nokukhanya remembers she advised Luthuli to take a route that was shorter. At the funeral, Nokukhanya sorrowfully disclosed in her address to the congregation, “I had urged him to not use the bridge but to take a *longer*, safe route” (my emphasis). *Sunday Tribune*, “He Will Be Buried in a Multi-Racial Cemetery”, 30 July 1967.

¹⁶⁷ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Nokukhanya Luthuli, Inquest Report, Exh. R, sworn statement, 01 August 1967.

He said that [tomorrow] he wanted to go and see how the cane workers were progressing...I protested: "But you were there yesterday. You get so exhausted and you look so tired. I will go myself, either tomorrow or on Monday, when I come back from Durban. There is no hurry". But he insisted saying, "No, I'll go".¹⁶⁸

Also on the same day, Luthuli, as was his custom, provided a devotion as he conducted a short worship service at his home. After concluding, Luthuli said that tomorrow he would not lead the prayer meeting. Rather, he appointed Nokukhanya for this task. None of the family members took any notice of the comment, despite its break with family tradition.¹⁶⁹

On Friday, 21 July 1967, after a hurried breakfast with his wife, Luthuli left his home at about 08:30 informing her that he would be walking to his general dealer's store near the Gledhow train station.¹⁷⁰ That day, Nokukhanya also left home for Durban to purchase seed potatoes. Luthuli stood, as he usually did, at the bus stop on the corner of the 'Main Road', waiting alone for a benevolent lift from a passing vehicle to his general dealer's store about a mile and half away. Roughly an hour later, at 09:30, Luthuli arrived at his shop where he delivered a package to Eness Mfeka, an employee at the store. *Drum* magazine described Luthuli's store in April 1964 as follows:

Luthuli's shop is a tumble-down old building with crude sign-writings in front. To lend some brightness to the otherwise drab surroundings are coloured trade advertisements adorning paint-starved walls.¹⁷¹

Luthuli walked to his store every day from his home. From his home or his store, he travelled to and from the 'trust land' he rented, to supervise his few workers. Luthuli grew sugar cane about a half a mile away from the Umvoti River railway bridge, or three hundred yards by Nokukhanya's estimation, on the south side of the river, slightly west (inland) of the bridge that he crossed to reach his fields. Since 06:30 that morning, two

¹⁶⁸ Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 140.

¹⁶⁹ *Post*, "Luthuli's Last Hours – By His Son", 30 July 1967.

¹⁷⁰ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Nokukhanya Luthuli, Inquest Report, Exh. R., sworn statement, 01 August 1967.

¹⁷¹ *Drum*, "The Old Campaigner Starts a New Life", by G. R. Naidoo, April 1964.

men (Mbuyeseni and Mpanza) and a woman (Ziphi Gumede) were busy cutting cane in Luthuli's field at a place where the bridge was visible.¹⁷²

At approximately 10:00, Luthuli left the store, declined a cup of tea and informed Mfeka that he was going to his fields but that he would be returning.¹⁷³ Detective Charles Lewis of the South African Railways Police in Durban reported that he interviewed the people working on Luthuli's land and that none had seen or met with Luthuli that morning.¹⁷⁴ In her testimony, Gumede also mentioned that Luthuli did not meet her and the two men as expected.¹⁷⁵ Almost forty minutes later, Luthuli decided to re-cross the river to return to his store without having fulfilled his objective. Luthuli could have verified their progress visually from afar. But, having walked across the bridge to the fields, one would assume that Luthuli would converse with those whom he supervised. Each day, for five consecutive days preceding his death, Luthuli had visited his workers.¹⁷⁶ In 1964, one reporter who accompanied Luthuli on his daily routine wrote about his time with Luthuli.

At all of his farms, [Luthuli] not only supervises the work of the day, but listens to the problems of his small band of labourers who always have treated him as their father, apart from giving him the respect a chief normally deserves.¹⁷⁷

No one is known to have seen him during the thirty-eight minutes following his departure from the store. On his way back to the store, tragedy struck.

At 10:29, goods train No. 332 pulled by locomotive No. 2045 left Stanger (now Kwadukuza), southbound for Durban. The day was bright and clear. Aboard the train rode the Driver (Stephanus Lategan), the Conductor or 'Guard' (Pieter van Wyk) and the

¹⁷² Gumede knew Mbuyeseni only by his first name and Mpanza only by his surname. Apparently, the police took no statements from the two men. Presumably, the police assumed their testimonies would be identical to Gumede's, as she alluded in her testimony.

¹⁷³ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Eness Mfeka, Inquest Report, Exh. S, sworn statement, 25 July 1967.

¹⁷⁴ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Charles Lewis, Inquest Report, Exh. D., sworn testimony, 03 August 1967.

¹⁷⁵ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Ziphi Gumede, Inquest Report, Exh. T., sworn testimony, 01 July (sic) 1967. This date must actually be "01 August 1967".

¹⁷⁶ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Ziphi Gumede, Inquest Report, Exh. T., sworn testimony, 01 July 1967 (sic).

¹⁷⁷ *Drum*, "The Old Campaigner Starts a New Life", by G. R. Naidoo, April 1964.

Boiler or 'Fireman' (Daniel Greyling). The train, running engine first, consisted of 60 axles (that is, fifteen carriages) with a tonnage of 767 tons loaded with syrup and sugar. At 10:36 the train passed Gledhow station, where Andries Pretorius was the Station Master, without stopping. At 10:38, two minutes after passing the Gledhow station, the train began to cross the Umvoti River railway bridge that was situated about a thousand yards away. Anyone entering the bridge from the south would have passed a sign that read, "Umvoti River / Persons / Cross This Bridge at Their Own Risk" in English and Afrikaans. The Driver consistently indicated in his testimony and his cross-examination that he blew the whistle from the time he observed a pedestrian walking towards the train from the south end of the bridge until the train reached him. The Driver elaborated:

This Bantu however did not appear to me to take any notice whatsoever of my train but just continued walking along the side of the bridge in the direction of the approaching locomotive. He had walked about the distance of about fifteen or sixteen paces along this bridge when my engine commenced to overtake him...he made no attempt to step towards the side or turn his body sideways to the moving train but continued to walk in the same manner...¹⁷⁸

The Driver then exclaimed to the Boiler that the train "knocked someone". The Driver testified:

In my estimation the front right hand side of the buffer beam missed this Bantu by a fraction that I would have estimated at about two inches and the engine moved past him up to the place where the front end of the cab of the locomotive is situated and I saw the corner of the cab strike him on the right shoulder and this caused him to be spun around and I saw him lose his balance and fall between the right hand side of the bridge and the moving train.¹⁷⁹

The Driver then immediately applied the brakes at the southern end of the bridge, bringing it to a standstill. Upon looking to the rear, the Conductor noticed a man lying on

¹⁷⁸ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Stephanus Lategan, Inquest Report, Exh. U., sworn statement, 24 July 1967.

¹⁷⁹ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Stephanus Lategan, Inquest Report, Exh. U., sworn statement, 24 July 1967.

the side of the bridge by the footplate. The Conductor disembarked. While walking back...

...I noticed that it was an elderly Bantu man with a white goatee dressed in a khaki shirt, pants, and a coat with a similar colour and he wore a pair of brown shoes. To me it seemed as if this Bantu was either dead or unconscious and I saw blood oozing out of his mouth. I did not know this Bantu man.¹⁸⁰

The Boiler and the Driver disembarked from the train and found the man lying with his head just alongside the western (right) leg of the line with his head hanging through between the side of the rail and the sleepers. Though the injured man was alive and breathing, the Boiler presumed he had received head injuries as he could see blood flowing from his mouth and he appeared to be unconscious. Also noticed by the Driver was the severe laceration on the top/middle portion of the head. The man's face was covered in blood that streamed across it. The Boiler and the Driver placed him, particularly his head, in a more comfortable position. The Driver testified that the Conductor requested the Station Foreman (Steyn) and Master to summon an ambulance.

After phoning Stanger for an ambulance to come, the Station Master and Foreman immediately departed on foot for the bridge. They found the Conductor and the Driver standing at the south end of the bridge next to Luthuli who was lying on the track and on the steel plate that is used to walk across the bridge. The Station Master testified:

This Bantu was lying on his back and I saw that he had sustained severe head injuries which were bleeding profusely and he was unconscious at the same time. Immediately I saw this elderly Bantu[.] I recognised him as being ex-Chief Albert Luthuli from Groutville.¹⁸¹

According to Gwendoline Gregersen, the Senior Medical Superintendent of Stanger Hospital, Luthuli was found in the following condition when she first saw him in

¹⁸⁰ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Stephanus Lategan, Inquest Report, Exh. U., sworn statement, 24 July 1967.

¹⁸¹ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Andries Pretorius, Inquest Report, Exh. M., sworn statement, 25 July 1967.

the Casualty Department five minutes after his arrival at the hospital (approximately 11:50):

He was shocked (sic). His pulse was 120, his blood pressure was 130/80, he had a fracture (?) base of the skull and he was bleeding freely from injuries to this head; he was semi-conscious. The patient had a jagged laceration at the base of the skull on the left hand side; this injury was about four to five inches in length from the outer ends. There was a three inch laceration on the centre of the occiput, on the right perital region he had an abrasion and a laceration an inch long. He was bleeding freely from the right ear; and he had fractured ribs on both sides; he had a fractured left elbow; he had a bruising (?) Fracture of the left hand; he had a laceration to the right lower leg.¹⁸²

From 11:50 to 14:20, two and one half hours, the doctors treated Luthuli for his wounds. The staff first gave him a blood transfusion and his lacerations were sutured. Next, Luthuli was X-rayed and given oxygen. At some time, Luthuli was administered the heart stimulant Coramine. At 12:15, Luthuli's second son, Christian arrived at the Luthuli home and was informed by the Station Master that his father had been struck by a train. At 13:05, while visiting her son-in-law, Thulani Gcabashe, and daughter, Hilda Thandeka, at St. Aiden's Hospital in Durban, Nokukhanya was told her husband had been involved in an accident.¹⁸³ Christian arrived with two 'sisters-in-law' at the hospital shortly before 13:00 and saw his father.¹⁸⁴ Luthuli was conscious.

My father looked so peaceful. His head was heavily bandaged. He tried to smile at me. I asked him how he was feeling, and he replied that he could feel nothing. These were his only words he spoke. I was too overcome with emotion and I walked out of the room.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, Gwendoline Gregersen, Inquest Report, Exh. A., sworn statement, 24 July 1967.

¹⁸³ Hilda was a nurse at St. Aiden's. Nokukhanya also received a message from a second daughter, Eleanor Smangele (who was a nurse at McCord Zulu Hospital in Overport) that her husband had met with an accident.

¹⁸⁴ On 04 November 2005, I interviewed Christian Luthuli at length. I recorded over one and half hours of discussion while walking to Luthuli's old shop, crossing the river and viewing the site where he was killed. Part of the interview concentrates on the day of Luthuli's death. I have chosen to use excerpts from his interview with *The Post* with the understanding that accuracy would be greater one week after the accident rather than almost thirty years. None of his testimony in 2005 contradicted his recollections in 1967.

¹⁸⁵ *Post*, "Luthuli's Last Hours – By His Son", 30 July 1967.

Nokukhanya received news through Christian of Luthuli's possible transfer for brain surgery and proceeded to King Edward VIII Hospital in Durban. Luthuli's wife and daughter searched in vain for him at King Edward. In Stanger, Luthuli's condition deteriorated despite resuscitative measures. It was decided to not transfer Luthuli to King Edward because he was not stable. Instead, a decision was made to send for a neurosurgeon from Durban to come to Stanger. Upon hearing this news at King Edward, Nokukhanya proceeded north to Stanger.

At about 13:30, Christian joined two of his family relations and Gideon Sivetye, a Congregational minister, brother-in-law and close friend of Luthuli, at the hospital. There they saw Luthuli, who had trouble breathing. At about 14:15, Sivetye led a prayer around Luthuli's bedside with his family and members of the hospital staff in attendance. Christian feared speaking to his father, lest he strain him and cause him to die. Christian remembered:

When I saw him, I knew then that the sun was setting for my father. I knew then that the thin threads of life were breaking. The Rev. Sivetye led a prayer at my father's bedside in which my cousin, sister-in-law, and the sister in charge and I joined. It was a simple prayer, said by a friend who was choking with emotion. My father appeared to be peaceful when the prayer was said. His breathing was hardly noticeable but perhaps he was conscious that we were praying for him and his last moments must have been happy ones.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ *Post*, "Luthuli's Last Hours – By His Son", 30 July 1967.

Nokukhanya's memory of the event documented by Rule is exactly *opposite* of Christian's testimony days after the accident documented in the *Post*. In her biography, Nokukhanya imagined that Luthuli had been "alert right up to the time that he passed away...Because he was lucid right up to the end, [Christian] did not realise that he was dying".

Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 140.

Also in Rule's book, Nokukhanya revealed that Luthuli did not wish to have a "noise" over his death due to foul play. Nokukhanya added that Luthuli chose not reveal who killed him. She visualised: "When Christian, who was at home at the time, got the message and went to the hospital, he found him in great pain. 'How are you father?' he asked. Albert said, 'The pain is terrible'. Christian never asked him how it happened. Albert could have talked and said, 'Such and such a thing happened to me', but there was silence, and it's all the better".

Rule, *Nokukhanya*, 145.

It seems that in writing about Luthuli's death and relating the family's suspicions, Rule also did not cross check oral testimony with written documentary evidence, i.e., articles and testimony dating back to the time of death. Why Rule included these particular recollections of Nokukhanya in his book when they contradicted the sworn medical evidence of Luthuli's condition (i.e., semi-consciousness) that he had referenced is unknown.

Immediately following the prayer, a neurological surgeon from St. Augustine's Medical Centre in Durban, Mauritius Joubert, arrived at Stanger Hospital at 14:20. Joubert reported in his sworn statement that upon his arrival he found Luthuli to be in a deep coma and not responding to any stimulation. Joubert confirms that X-rays determined that extensive skull fractures were present as well as a fracture of the left elbow and right ninth rib.¹⁸⁷ The Senior Medical Superintendent of Stanger Hospital was present for the entirety of Joubert's examination. Five minutes later, at 14:25, Luthuli died. By Christian's account, exactly five minutes later, at 14:30 Nokukhanya arrived at the hospital. Joubert and/or a nurse confided the news of her husband's death to Nokukhanya, who missed by only moments saying goodbye to her husband. The first words Nokukhanya uttered after being told the news was, "I want to see my husband". For fifteen minutes, she cried alone, quietly, over her husband. That evening, in keeping with her husband's last wishes for her to lead the family service this day, Nokukhanya prayed a simple prayer.

Perhaps the most pertinent question is: What was Luthuli doing for almost forty minutes from the time he left his store to the time of the accident, if not visiting those whom he intended on supervising in his field? Did he not feel well? Was he suffering a mild stroke and thus not thinking clearly? This is possible given Luthuli's four week admittance to McCord Zulu Hospital just three months prior to his accident. Why did he not take the short (or long) way either through the cane fields or over the new bridge as his wife suggested earlier in the week? While suffering a stroke, did he then revert to his daily habitual pattern and path toward the store? Did he become uncoordinated as he did during his 1955 stroke, as described by Albertinah Luthuli in this study? In 1955, his stroke was perceptible only over time; his cognitive and physical abilities were only gradually, but substantively, impaired. A stroke, disorienting him sufficiently to be hit by a passing train with a cab that overlaps the bridge's very narrow ten and one half inch footplate, is the most obvious explanation for the accident. Luthuli had a long history of hypertension, hospitalising him in 1955, 1961, 1966 and 1967. The overall state of his

¹⁸⁷ UCT, MAD, LC, AJLP, BCZA 78/46-47, CAMP MF 2914, M. J. Joubert, Inquest Report, Exh. B., affidavit, 05 August 1967.

heath, chronic high blood pressure condition and history of strokes are factors that point to the cause of Luthuli's death.

Conclusion

Mandela's autobiography revealed a glimpse of the contestation that existed within the liberation movement concerning Luthuli's leadership strategies even in the wake of his death in 1967. While in prison on Robben Island, one reaction to Luthuli's death distressed Mandela:

...we also learned of Chief Luthuli's death at home in July 1967... Luthuli's death left a great vacuum in the organisation; the Chief was a Nobel Prize winner, a distinguished, internationally known figure, a man who commanded respect from both Black[s] and White[s]. For these reasons, he was irreplaceable... We organised a small memorial service for the Chief in Section B and permitted everyone who wanted to say something to do so. It was a quiet, respectful service with only one sour note. When Neville Alexander of the Non-European Movement rose to speak, it was apparent that he had come not to praise the Chief but to bury him. Without even perfunctory regrets at the man's passing, he accused Luthuli of being a stooge of the White man, mainly on the ground that the Chief had accepted the Nobel Peace Prize.¹⁸⁸

Chapter six continues the work of previous chapters that reviewed the contestation between the more militant leadership's intention to move to a violent revolutionary phase of the struggle and Luthuli's adherence to perceived long-expired political strategies and his close associations with Whites. This chapter reveals that Luthuli's 1962 autobiography written to a specific constituency that he felt was the key to liberation and his domestic appeals for strict non-violence in the *Post* were found to be

¹⁸⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 522-3.

Mandela always respected Luthuli. In time, Mandela would also earn the Nobel Peace Prize. Mandela befriended his warders, led a Government of National Unity in partnership with a party that imprisoned him for over two decades, wore the Springbok jersey, had tea with the widow of Apartheid's architect and orchestrated a miracle by leading a political and social revolution without civil war. Luthuli would have been proud, very proud, of his lieutenant in 1994. Despite their political differences in July 1961, Mandela never forgot the lessons Luthuli taught. Yet, Mandela and Luthuli were not the same. By articulating their differences, the purveyors of history can best accurately remember them and honour the reasons for which they fought.

embarrassing by some of his lieutenants. These and other divergent perspectives concerning the direction of the liberation movement have in large part been silenced by a nationalist historical narrative that seeks to distance the ANC from Luthuli's steadfast convictions yet still respect him for the international prestige he brought the movement. This sanitised and homogenised ANC history inaccurately conflates Luthuli's ideals and strategies with Mandela's and incorrectly teaches that all leaders in the movement came to believe there was 'no option' but to turn to violence.

Chapter six concludes that which chapters four and five began: a story of Luthuli's waning influence and desperate attempts to keep non-violent methods alive. This chapter argues that Luthuli looked to the West while Mandela looked to Africa; Luthuli preached that non-violent methods needed to be more faithfully implemented while Mandela said at the PAFMECSA conference that leadership that gives such advice "commits a crime against its own people"; Luthuli remained with a strategy dependent upon a non-racial alliance while Mandela was enamoured with and wished to capture the attention the PAC received from black Africans; Luthuli viewed himself as an obedient prophet, priest and ethical leader while Mandela trained to be a Commander-in-Chief and a general. This study asserts that in time, despite working internationally with the same liberal, white, often-pacifist and Christian allies such as George Houser, Luthuli was rendered irrelevant domestically by the liberation movement itself and by the government through the Sabotage Act. Contrary to what contemporary political commemorative histories claim, Luthuli did not wage or support the armed struggle in secret meetings under the cover of cane. He tilled the fields with his workers during the last years of his life. If the above is true, the question must be asked, "Why would the government have him killed?" A review of Luthuli's chronic health problems, then recent hospitalisations and the precariousness of traversing that particular bridge adjacent to a passing train, suggests that even a mild stroke would disorient Luthuli enough to result in a tragic death.

Conclusion

Tormented by the Ideal¹

As a devoted Christian [Luthuli] has always taken an active part in church affairs both in his own church of the American Board Missions and in missionary circles generally. He has been Vice-President of the Christian Council of South Africa. He is a firm believer in the idea that the Christian principle of the value, dignity, of every individual ought to pervade all our social, economic and political policies. -- Zachariah Matthews²

Synopsis of Findings

This study brings 'church' history into political history by weaving together biography and ecclesiology to more accurately understand Chief Albert Luthuli's life and to argue that his political convictions were primarily theologically motivated. While this study investigates many political issues, the question of violence as a strategy to liberate South Africa from Apartheid most comprehensively, but not exclusively, illustrates the confluence of Luthuli's political thoughts and ecclesiastic heritage. Luthuli's reception of the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize and the 2008 contestation surrounding the renaming a primary school in Amanzimtoti after Andrew Zondo and hosting an exhibition about him speak to the fact that the question of violence was then, and still is today, the pre-eminent contentious issue concerning the liberation struggle.³

Contrary to current public historical mythology and in concurrence with more scholarly contributions, this study concludes that Luthuli never subscribed to or supported the use of violence because his ecclesiastic roots, associations and loyalties ran

¹ "We must continue to be tormented by the ideal [in human and structural relations]. Its possibility must be there for peoples to attempt to put it in practice, to begin over and over again, wherever in the world it has ever been tried, or has failed... Without the will to tramp towards that possibility, no relations of Whites, of the West, with the West's formerly subject people can ever be free from the past..." Gordimer, *The Essential Gesture*, 237.

² Zachariah Matthews, "Albert John Luthuli: A Personal Tribute", *South African Outlook* 92, no. 1089, 01 January 1962.

³ A. Young, "Glorifying a Murderer Will Only Stir Up More Hatred", *Natal Mercury*, 19 November 2008, 9.
Thembinkosi Ngcobo, "Zondo Display Is about Creating Dialogue", *Natal Mercury*, 20 November 2008, 13.

far deeper than his political ones. This study asserts that the ANC first claimed Luthuli subscribed to or supported violence after his death, and since then has propagated a myth that he did. Luthuli's faith-based character and political perspectives encouraged the spectrum of South African society open to a multiracial democracy to recognise him as a national leader. However, the intransigence of and resort to violence by the National Party regime led more militant leaders of the ANC to conclude that those same unrelinquished Christian values and associations rendered Luthuli's leadership by May 1961 naïve, irrelevant and thus obsolete in the new political climate.

This investigation set out to explain the dynamic that existed between Luthuli and Congregationalism whereby the values or ideals of Christocentric western culture were accepted by Luthuli and implemented. The introduction to this study briefly expounded upon the nature of Congregationalism, emphasising that its uniqueness as a faith tradition most obviously manifests itself through its polity more so than through its theological conceptions. The various names of Luthuli's faith tradition such as Congregationalism, Non-conformism and Separatism all emphasise a form of church governance that cherish dissent, freedom of thought and democracy. Congregationalism's unique polity and the various attributes that inspire it were never limited to the church and naturally carried over into society and civil governance (whether in England, North America or South Africa). Congregationalism's primary strengths, such as a biblically motivated concern for justice and a yearning for education, were reflected throughout Luthuli's life and most notably in his political speeches. Congregationalism's ideals were never far from Luthuli's mind and were shown in the manner in which he chaired meetings, encouraged diversity and yielded to a majority decision. Luthuli was a democrat, an egalitarian and a strong advocate for freedom. The Congregationalist polity in which Luthuli was saturated convinced him of the rightness and efficacy of free speech, debate and constitutional methods. Luthuli was a gradualist who reasoned that incremental steps were the surest and soundest means to achieve liberation.

In his Nobel acceptance speech, Luthuli specifically remembered his ecclesiastic forefathers, Philip and Livingstone, as examples of those who lived out the Christian Congregational ideal. Examples are too few and far between of missionaries who strove for the ideal their faith and polity proclaimed and hence some historians have judged

them collectively as a pre-emptive force used to 'soften-up' indigenous societies for the full colonial onslaught. Yet, as the introduction explains there existed those missiological characters who, unlike the majority of their colleagues, practiced that which their faith and polity espoused. American and LMS missionaries were not homogenous. The Comaroffs mention some evangelists "found common cause and cooperated openly" as an ally with the forces of colonialism (e.g., Mackenzie) while others "ended locked up in battle with secular forces for – what they took to be – the destiny of the continent" (e.g., van der Kemp). In this investigation, terse ecclesiastical biographies demonstrate how the Congregational ideal was at times embodied. From those examples Luthuli engendered his politics; those rare few who, to state in layman's terms, 'practised what they preached' and provided brief glimpses of Congregationalism incarnated. The American Board brought Congregationalism to what is now Kwazulu-Natal and helped produce ka Seme and Dube, the ANC's founder and first President, respectively. Congregationalism founded the Umvoti Mission Station (Groutville) where its values imbedded themselves in the home, church and community that nurtured Luthuli. The theology Luthuli heard from the pulpit provided him with confidence that, though slowly, equality between the races would be realised when all were ripe for its benefits. Luthuli viewed all humans as fundamentally good, created in the "Image of God" and children of God. Non-violence, conciliation and compromise were not just strategically wise, but essential to expressing the dignity and worth of every person.

By 1967, the year of Luthuli's death and during the height of Apartheid, Congregationalism demonstrated its ecumenical spirit by uniting different churches to form the multi-racial United Congregational Church of Southern Africa and in the 1970s and 1980s placed itself in the forefront of the anti-Apartheid struggle. Though 'liberal', the grassroots of the Congregational faith remained conservative as it regarded the ethics of using violence as a means to achieve liberation. Congregationalists' collective response to the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Violence expressed grave concern about condoning violence by even indirectly supporting armed movements. The chapters following the introduction highlight many of the above facets of Congregationalism that Luthuli embodied throughout his life and leadership of the ANC.

Chapter one conveys that Luthuli's ecclesiastic roots were deep and extended, more so than his political roots in the ANC that were sown relatively late in his life. Luthuli began the story of his genealogy with his grandfather, Ntaba, a follower of the American missionary Grout. The American Board that reared, educated, mentored, employed and preached to Luthuli throughout his formative years instilled in him a reverence for the values espoused by the western world. In the lives of Luthuli's biological and ecclesiastic forebears, what the Comaroffs termed "complex historical dynamics" and "the dialectics of culture and consciousness" were identified so as to provide a balanced view of the relationship between missionaries and indigenous people.⁴ Luthuli's ecclesiastic ancestors and mentors were not simply 'products' of Congregationalism; other ingredients, some inherent, formed them. In the same manner, this study explains that Luthuli was independently intelligent, possessed 'agency' and thus was "motivated".⁵

Luthuli recognised that his experience at the American Board's Adams College was the most formative experience of his life. Luthuli evaluated charitably the personalities he encountered during his time at Adams, from those that betrayed the ideal such as Loram and de Villiers, to those who represented the ideal such as Brueckner, Brookes and Atkins. Luthuli respected them for their beneficence toward him and instilled a lifelong commitment to interracial cooperation. The Congregationalist and one time leader of the American Board, Reuling, had the longest association with Luthuli spanning over forty years and likely had the most substantive impact on Luthuli's life.

Despite the profound impact Congregationalism had on Luthuli, he was not a blank slate upon which Congregationalism (or any other kind of -ism) could just write. Nonetheless, Congregationalism and Luthuli intersected and their intersection should be seen as the primary lens through which his political thought is analysed. In reasoning that this intersection was seminal throughout Luthuli's life, this study investigated the dynamics and product of that interface, particularly on his politics, in order to more accurately understand the man. Luthuli can not simply be interpreted to be a loyal cadre and leader of the ANC. As the Comaroffs rightly commented:

⁴ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 6.

Denis, "From Church History to Religious History", 88-9.

⁵ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 10.

Once the motives, intentions and imaginings of persons living or dead are allowed to speak from the historical record, it becomes impossible to see them as mere reflections of monolithic cultural structures or social forces.⁶

The most biographical section of this study, chapter two, traces Luthuli's ascendancy as a political leader. Luthuli's early leadership experiences disillusioned him to working exclusively along ethnic or racial lines. The Natal African Teachers' Association experienced few successes advocating to the Department of Education. The Zulu Language and Cultural Society diverted its focus from encouraging mass education and the grafting positive aspects of Zulu culture onto western ways to ethnic insularity. Though Luthuli achieved some successes with the cane growing associations, Luthuli wrote in his autobiography that Africans were difficult to unite and were often "apathetic and uncooperative". The divide and rule tactics always seemed to hold sway. Luthuli confided in his autobiography that he felt a sense of disappointment in his own Groutville community after they rather meekly and mildly resigned themselves to the government's removing him as Chief.

In large part because of these disappointments and the government's dismissive attitude toward the Native Representative Council, Luthuli placed his faith in multiracial and international collaborative efforts. Benevolent white, liberal and Christian allies possessed organisational and writing skills, political influence, finances and a sense of unity that Luthuli felt was necessary to mobilise public opposition to assert pressure against the National Party. From the 1930s, many ecclesiastic organisations, Congregationalist included, afforded Luthuli opportunities and leadership roles that were not necessarily afforded to the same degree to his more militant lieutenants. Luthuli's travels to the International Missionary Conference in India and to the United States on a speaking tour were sponsored by the church. The Natal Missionary Conference elected him their first black Chair. Luthuli participated in the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the South African Institute of Race Relations, the Christian Council of South Africa (Executive member and Vice-President), the advisory boards of Inanda Seminary, Adams College and McCord Zulu Hospital, Bantu Congregational Church (Chair), the Mission

⁶ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 10.

Reserve Association, the International Club and the Durban Joint Council of Europeans and Africans. These numerous and rich involvements in multiracial organisations engrained in Luthuli a confidence that dialogue, negotiation and cooperation were possible with Whites and that violence as a method must be avoided to prevent a subsequent race war. These substantive engagements and platforms equipped Luthuli to endear himself almost messianically to Whites in Cape Town during his 1959 tour and led to his resistance of Mandela's 1962 proposal for the ANC (Blacks) to be seen to be in control of the Congress Alliance.

Chapter two also captures events that lead to the apex of Luthuli's political influence. Luthuli's election as President of the Natal ANC elevated him as a prominent leader during the Defiance Campaign. The Campaign earned Luthuli the ire of the government who subsequently dismissed him from his chieftaincy. Concerning the primary thesis of this study, this chapter proved with archival documentation that Luthuli's most famous *political* statement, "The Road to Freedom Is Via the Cross", was *theologically* motivated and homiletically generated. The statement launched Luthuli into the national spotlight and he was shortly thereafter elected President-General of the ANC. Luthuli's lack of involvement with the drafting of the Freedom Charter due to a serious stroke and his absence from the Congress of the People due to his ban foreshadowed an enthusiastic movement's willingness to bypass its leader. Luthuli would yield to the ANC's ratification of the Charter for the sake of unity, despite his discomfort with many of the specifics contained within it.

The 1956-1961 Treason Trial brought the entire liberation movement together for the first time. Despite the seriousness of the charges and disruption the Trial caused to families and finances, the movement's mood was buoyant and all involved proudly viewed Luthuli to be their capable leader. The movement was unified, gathered, held the moral high ground, attracted international sympathy and received the moral support and financial succour from many sectors of society. Luthuli held together all types under one broad political church: Communists and anti-Communists, men and women, Indians, Coloureds, Blacks, Whites, Christians, Muslims, rich and poor, educated and undereducated, militant and moderate. At this time, Luthuli reached the zenith of his

political life. Soon, the state dropped the charges against Luthuli. Yet, Mandela and others continued to face the threat of capital punishment until the Trial's conclusion.

Chapter two also focuses upon the breakaway of the Africanist camp within the ANC. While the Africanists went their own way, they were influential within the ANC as Mandela and others sought to compete with their popularity throughout the increasingly independent African continent. Competition with the PAC led younger leaders of the ANC to be less patient, more militant and less willing to cooperate with white western liberal Christians in the fight against Apartheid. Because this was Luthuli's base of solidarity, his influence began to wane in 1960 and 1961. Also in 1959 Luthuli adamantly protested the creation of the bantustan framework. His position on Bantustans, like his positions on the issues of violence and multi-racial cooperation, is an example of a political philosophy motivated by theological considerations. The bantustan framework violated Luthuli's conception of all societies' progression to 'civilisation' through cooperation and was thus a violation of God's will (divine Providence). In short, the bantustan framework and the theology that underpinned it was, from Luthuli's perspective, a heresy.

Chapter three interrupts the biographic narrative and identifies two popular myths concerning Luthuli that are generally not supported in more serious academic works: that he supported the turn to violence and therefore, by implication, that he died a "mysterious" death at the hand of an assassin. First, while through 'promotional' publications such as *Sechaba* and *Mayibuye*, internet websites and organisational histories the ANC consistently implied Luthuli came to support the turn to violence, texts written from 1962 to 1994 (Bunting, Slovo and Benson) incorrectly claimed that Luthuli did not participate in and was ignorant of the formation of *MK*. After Mandela's 1994 autobiography, virtually political representations of Luthuli cited Mandela and repeated his claim that as it concerns Luthuli's supposed ignorance about the formation of *MK* and his supposed opposition the ANC's turn to violence, "nothing could be farther from the truth". That Luthuli knew of *MK's* formation is accurate. That Luthuli supported *MK's* launch is not. Recently, political elites such as Ndebele, Nair, Zuma and Asmal imply in commemorative audiovisual documentaries a conclusion that Luthuli came to support and even participated as a leader in the prosecution of violence. Chapter three discloses that

numerous pronouncements, such as “The Road to Freedom” and the Rivonia Trial statements, are anachronistically interpreted to support the armed movement when in fact a careful analysis of both concludes that they expressed opposition to the armed struggle. As pointed out in the preface, nationalist interpretations of Luthuli’s stand on violence almost exclusively emphasise political viewpoints at the expense of more illuminating theological ones. Second and finally, suspicions that Luthuli was assassinated were published by the ANC and other African liberation movements immediately following his death. None of the suspicions are backed by any evidence. Conspiracy theorists discount the findings of the inquest despite the fact that the Luthuli family had legal representation who did not dispute its finding and in the face of a sworn statement from Nokukhanya stating she was confident that her husband’s death was the result of an accident. This study concludes that perceptions related to suspicions from whence the conspiracy theories germinate are contradictory while the contemporaneous archival evidence generated by the inquest, medical history, personal documents (or lack thereof) and Luthuli’s last will and testament is consistent and plausible.

Chapter four resumes the chronological narrative to explain how Sharpeville and the State of Emergency led many within the ANC to believe that non-violent methods were futile against an increasingly violent National Party regime. On the morning of Sharpeville, Luthuli’s column in the *Golden City Post* pleaded for Whites to change their hearts and that Blacks “can not manage without the Whites in South Africa”. During the Emergency, Turok explained that the ANC and the SACP fused as a result of mass arrests and organisational bans thus cutting Luthuli out of an almost non-existent chain of command. Mandela, Sisulu and Nokwe strategised and advised their President-General what to do. Luthuli defiantly burned his pass. However, upon sentencing, Luthuli declined from issuing a statement that called on all South Africans to struggle “without flinching” thus casting himself in the mould of Xuma and Moroka before him who were passed-over for leadership by younger more militant and impatient Youth Leaguers. Also stunting Luthuli’s ability to lead and influence during the post-Sharpeville Treason Trial was his privileged and sequestered status due to his health and his very close white, liberal and Christian associates who often hosted him. The PAC used this against Luthuli and the ANC, claiming that they were underlings for their white bosses and liberal press

corps. Luthuli's autobiography narrating events of the time provided a long list of white supporters such as Taylor, Reeves, Brink, Hooper, Collins and many others whose moral, economic, and political assistance Luthuli felt was invaluable and indispensable. This study rejects a conclusion that Luthuli was subservient to his liberal and Christian associations. Rather, similar outlooks and strategy considerations bound Luthuli to these associations thus gradually distancing himself from his more militant lieutenants.

Chapter five finds that the first ten months of 1961 gave Luthuli little evidence that non-violent methods were viable. Hammarskjöld's visit disappointed, the PAC, Liberal Party and the ANC's incessant disputes weakened the movement prior to the All-Africa Conference and the government prepared itself to use overwhelming force to ensure that non-violent mass action, such as the May strike, did not succeed. Mandela and ANC history always claimed that the failure of the May strike precipitated the necessity to turn to violence. However, Mandela's own assessments of the strike suggest a conclusion that it was at least succeeding and thus his calling off of the strike was premature. This assessment led one Indian Congress member and Luthuli to claim that "non-violence has not failed us, we have failed non-violence".

In July 1961, NEC and CJE meetings in Luthuli's presence resolved after two bitter all-night debates to allow the formation of an armed movement, *MK*. Many important qualifications must be made regarding Luthuli's participation in this decision. One, he did not support the decision; he only democratically yielded to it. Two, the decision was made only after an exhausting all-night meeting where fatigue more than any other factor enabled an unsettled consensus. Three, due to Luthuli's disagreement with the decision, he requested a compromise whereby *MK* would be a separate organisation from the ANC thus not dirtying his or the ANC's hands, that *MK* would be politically subject or linked to ANC (but operationally autonomous) and that the ANC would continue to emphasise traditional non-violent mass political action. Fourth and finally, the decision agreed to the formation of *MK* and not its initiation (launch).

In October 1961, the Nobel Committee announced that Luthuli would be awarded the 1960 Nobel Prize. In Luthuli's view, this removed the cul-de-sac that Mandela and others felt the non-violent movement had reached. Luthuli believed that the international attention now focused on the liberation movement, driven by those white, liberal,

Christian supporters who nominated him, would be the key to bringing sufficient moral, political and economic pressure on the National Party regime forcing its capitulation. From October, Luthuli sought at every opportunity through the press to forestall any thoughts or plans for *MK*'s activation. Luthuli repeatedly, in no uncertain terms, warned of the suicidal consequences of violent action and proclaimed that non-violent mass action was the only way forward. During Luthuli's trip to Norway, Luthuli emphasised many times in his acceptance speech, lecture and countless interviews that his position was firmly non-violent. Luthuli's advocacy went unheeded by *MK*'s High Command. On the day after his return from Oslo, perhaps in an effort to neutralise Luthuli, Mandela launched *MK* without Luthuli's knowledge, declaring through its Manifesto that, for all intents and purposes, the old strategies were not only extinct but led the government to perceive the liberation movement as weak and thereby encouraged the government's use of violence. Mandela effectively announced that armed revolution was the path forward.

Luthuli was livid. Yet, with *MK*'s launch, Luthuli was also politically impotent. As Mandela stated in his autobiography, 'there was no going back'. In Luthuli's estimation, Mandela prematurely activated *MK* and therefore was reckless and insubordinate. According to Sisulu, *MK*'s High Command failed to appreciate the significance of the Nobel Prize and short-circuited any possible benefit that may have accrued from it. Luthuli's conversation with Kotane summarised his feelings on the matter:

When my son decides to sleep with a girl, he does not ask for my permission, but he just does it. It is only afterwards, when the girl is pregnant and the parents make a case, that he brings his troubles home.⁷

Chapter five continues with the "afterwards" following *MK*'s launch, a post-mortem analysis. Based on multiple evaluations of *MK*'s strategic and tactical failure and according to ANC veterans' own analysis found in commemorative publications, *MK*'s launch destroyed the liberation movement in the short to medium term, rendering it dormant until the mid-1970s and still on the defensive until the late 1980s. Mandela chose to challenge the government at its greatest strength that was the liberation

⁷ Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, 269.

movement's greatest weakness: military prowess. Luthuli desired to continue to challenge the government with the liberation movement's greatest strength and the government's greatest weakness, moral authority.

The conclusion of chapter five resolves that Luthuli's disconcerting conversation with Mandela concerned the launch of *MK* on the heels of the Nobel Prize and not the formation of *MK* that Mandela believed Luthuli had forgotten due to ill health. Luthuli felt offended that all of the qualifications agreed to in July concerning *MK*'s formation were not honoured. Three covenants were broken: the primacy of political work, the political leadership of ANC was ignored with *MK*'s launch despite the ANC's leader pleas to forestall any initiation and lives were lost due to a dearth of discipline, training and competence.

Chapter six reviews the years 1962 to 1967 when Luthuli died and provided additional evidence that further confirmed many of this study's theses. First, Mandela's January 1962 trip abroad drove him further away from Luthuli concerning the strategic way forward. Mandela leaned toward pan-African nationalism in his fear of the PAC's popularity and Luthuli leaned more towards South African exceptionalism in his fear of losing the sympathy and support of his white liberal Christian constituency who he believed were indispensable to the struggle. Mandela categorically denounced Luthuli's position at the PAFMECSA conference, calling it a "crime" against his own people.

Second, Luthuli's autobiography released in February 1962 caused much embarrassment to Mandela and others, who felt that it portrayed the leader of the ANC to be a stooge of the Whites. Uniquely, this last chapter unpacks Luthuli's understanding of his leadership role by analysing the most obvious clue to doing so: the title of his autobiography. One can not historically interpret Luthuli by strictly analysing him politically, as *Sechaba* did. Luthuli's autobiographical title is biblical and therefore fundamentally theological. To understand Moses' role is to understand Luthuli. Using the hermeneutical lens of a typological re-enactment, one perceives that Luthuli saw himself as obedient rather than successful, an ethical as much as (if not more than) a political leader, non-violent rather than militarist and even a tragic rather than a triumphant character in his inability to reach the Promised Land.

In March 1962, Luthuli argued in the *Post* that non-violent methods must be exercised to the exclusion of violent methods. That same month, a meeting of the Joint Congresses expressed that Luthuli's statements were embarrassing, yet they gave him the benefit of the doubt in accordance with his stature by reasoning that the *Post* adulterated his opinions. An examination of all Luthuli's columns finds that they were characteristic of his style and printed verbatim from submitted drafts. With the exception of his stance on violence, Luthuli never expressed sentiments contrary to ANC or Joint Congress' decisions. Luthuli's *Post* columns and utterances strictly endorsing only non-violent methods stopped (domestically) shortly after the minutes recommend the matter be addressed with him. Nonetheless, it was the Sabotage Act in June 1962 that silenced Luthuli. Nationalist apologists for the turn to violence cite the fact that Luthuli did not condemn outright the initiation of violence. However, by his failure to condemn, one can not conclude he therefore supported violence. Luthuli's refusal to condemn was a demonstration of his sympathy and solidarity for those who had lost patience as well as his democratic ethos that would not undermine a decision taken even if he as the leader objected to it. Hence, Nokwe could "assure" that Luthuli would not denounce. Ronald Harrison reiterated this perspective in a 2006 interview:

I think [Mandela, Sisulu and Tambo] were driven towards [violence], you know? The violence that they, those militants, there was only one way that they could see. But, Albert Luthuli always maintained, "This is not the answer to our problems". Yeh. They became militant but under no circumstances [did] the Chief, the great and noble Chief, ever compromise his principles. He'd rather sit back. This I believe until this day. Then I also maintain that, that, because it was a fact that he would not denounce any particular person or any person, you know, he was not a person who would character assassinate. You would never, you would never hear him, there was not once, did he speak, "No!" that he said to Mandela or the *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, or to the others that what they were doing was wrong. He just reiterated, reiterated, reiterated. At no time did he denounce what they were doing because to him, making such a statement would have undone all the good that he had done in some way, or that others had done. So, he kept a low profile as that was concerned.⁸

⁸ Interview with Ronald Harrison, Cape Town, 14 January 2006.

Chapter six continues to emphasise Luthuli's allegiance to non-violent methods and his international advocacy for them. Luthuli's acceptance of the rectorship of Glasgow University in 1962 and the Family of Man award from the New York Protestant Council in 1964 (both given specifically for his non-violent stance) demonstrated that, unless Luthuli can be characterised as a hypocrite, he never supported the turn to violence. His continued relationship and cooperation with Houser's ACOA again emphasised his links with liberal, Christian, white and often pacifist supporters. In ACOA's sponsorship of their "Appeal for Action", King and Luthuli feared the likelihood of a race war should violence be utilised in the struggle and argued that peaceful methods of resistance such as boycotts and sanctions be implemented immediately.

The study concludes on a macabre, sensitive and controversial note: Was Luthuli murdered as so many suggest? After reviewing Luthuli's health, it is more than plausible that his death was the result of an accident possibly induced by a stroke. Luthuli had a long history of hypertension, high blood pressure and strokes. He had been hospitalised as early as 1952 and as late as 1967. In the final months of his life, his penmanship deteriorated, the number of archival records he produced plummeted, he became half blind and deaf and before an unusually long hospitalisation for an eye operation he prepared his Last Will and Testament. By Nokukhanya's evaluation, Luthuli looked tired a day before his death and she advised him to stay home and rest. On 21 July, Luthuli went from his shop to visit his workers in the field. They never saw him. He returned to his shop across a rail bridge's ten-and-a-half inch footplate. Photographic evidence shows that any misstep or failure to balance appropriately to avoid an approaching train with cab that extended over the footplate would prove catastrophic.

The myth that Luthuli was killed, like the myth that he supported the turn to violence, leads to inaccurate interpretations of Luthuli. To say that Luthuli was mysteriously killed is to understand that he still had a vital role in the struggle for liberation at the time of his death, that he was a threat to the Apartheid regime. Sadly, Luthuli had long since been considered obsolete by leaders of his own movement and he had little contact with those imprisoned, banned or exiled. Since Sharpeville, through the State of Emergency and upon the launch of *MK*, Luthuli served only as the honorary,

emeritus, titular leader of the ANC and thus no motive existed for his death. A martyr inspires the oppressed, not the oppressor.

Luthuli and Congregationalism

The dynamic between Luthuli and his missiological forebears can not be located on a one dimensional plane, whereby Luthuli assimilated bequeathed ideas, rejected others and adjusted some to fit. In matters of faith and polity, interaction occurred on two planes: one being that of the ideal (that to which is aspired and sought) and the other being what is practised (that which is implemented and realised). In matters of faith, the dialectic of consciousness between Congregationalism and Luthuli was multi-dimensional. Congregationalism exposed and educated Luthuli to its ideals, such as what the Comaroffs described as the “global democracy of material well-being and moral merit, of equality before the law and the Lord”.⁹ Luthuli in turn prophetically implemented that which Congregationalism espoused and did so arguably better than its progenitors, thus proving by his example that Whites had no monopoly on civilisation.

The Comaroffs provided an analysis that included both agency and structure to speak about the encounter of Luthuli (agency) and Congregationalism and those mentors who practiced it (structure). This investigation proposed a dynamic concerning Luthuli and Congregationalism that still remains ‘missing’. Perhaps the Comaroffs point to it when they identify a “liminal space between the hegemonic and the ideological and the conscious and the subconscious”.¹⁰ It is in this space that we can locate Luthuli, the proto-South African Liberation or Black Theology theologian, representing the *Amakholwa*, who is able within this space to imagine, redefine, innovate and create.

Hegemony, more a process than a state, saturates a “condition of being” so that it lies almost unrecognised, self-evident, assumed and “ineffable”.¹¹ Ideology is lesser in degree than hegemony; it is not embodied, it is communicable, it is contestable and it is therefore more easily resisted. Luthuli as a subject of colonial and evangelical influence utilised the tools provided to him by missionaries (theology, concepts of natural rights,

⁹ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 12.

¹⁰ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 30.

¹¹ Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 5 and 30, respectively.

language, education and private property) to develop a consciousness that could identify and accept the hegemony, critique its warped implementation by those who dominate and re-introduce it in its 'pure' form. A perfect example of this dialectic within Luthuli is his understanding of and acceptance of 'civilisation' (as a hegemonic concept) and his resistance to the pervasive and enforced ideology that civilisation is synonymous with 'whiteness'. Luthuli bought, 'lock stock and barrel', the assumption that civilisation was beneficial, should be engendered and made available to all who chose to participate in it. Yet, in the "liminal space between conscious and subconscious" Luthuli distinguished and situated himself between the hegemonic understanding of what constituted civilisation and the white supremacists' ideological assumption that it was Eurocentric. Luthuli was thus able to refashion his consciousness as an heir to civilisation and co-participant in its perennial evolution and hence, resist Apartheid. Raymond Williams insisted correctly that hegemony, though insidiously invasive, is never total.¹² In his autobiography, Luthuli explained:

I am angered by the Nationalist gibe nowadays that such schools as this one [Edendale], or Adams College, or St. Peter's, Rosettenville, turned out "Black Englishmen". It was no more necessary for pupils to become black Englishmen than it was for the teachers to become white Africans. Two cultures met, both Africans and Europeans were affected by the meeting. Both profited and both survived enriched. At Edendale, at Adams, and informally at other times, I have been taught by European mentors. I am aware of a profound gratitude for what I learned. I remain an African. I think as an African, I speak as an African, I act as an African, and as an African I worship the God whose children we all are. I do not see why it should be otherwise.¹³

Within a broader context, Philippe Denis insightfully affirmed Luthuli's sentiments:

In South Africa, as in other parts of the African continent, the development of Christianity has been moulded by African initiatives. Far from being "the duped and agent-less victims of processes beyond their control", the local people tried to make use of the religion brought by the missionaries to make sense of a world in rapid transformation.¹⁴

¹² Raymond William, *Marxism and Literature* (London: Oxford University, 1977), 109.

¹³ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 31.

¹⁴ Denis, "From Church History to Religious History", 90. Denis cited:

The reality that Congregationalism as a whole often failed to live up to its own ideals within the context of southern Africa evangelism does not invalidate the potent influence those ideals had on Luthuli. When it comes to accepting values, hypocrisy is not an automatic disqualifier. Luthuli was highly critical of Smuts' hypocrisy, but that did not diminish the impact Smuts' stated ideals had on Luthuli's politics. Smuts exposed his hypocrisy when he pontificated about universal values of human civilisation and then betrayed those values when reflecting and deciding upon the South African context. Luthuli commented in his autobiography that abroad, Smuts was seen as a world statesman of international repute while at home a relentless white supremacist.

There is a tendency nowadays to look back to the Smuts regime as a day of restraint and just government. In point of fact however, the General did not exert his undoubted influence to extend a helping hand to the masses who groaned under disabilities, and it was he who gave Hertzog the power to disenfranchise the few African votes.¹⁵

Disappointingly, the western democracies ultimately failed to see in the ANC Luthuli's embodiment of their highest aspirations and subsequently provided succour for the opposite with their continued investment in Apartheid South Africa. Luthuli was not blind to the chasm between the western world's ideals and its practice. He wrote a correspondence to *Peace News* in 1963 that excoriated western democracies that were complicit in South Africa's oppression of its black population.

To the nations and governments of the world, particularly those directly or indirectly giving aid and encouragement to this contemptible Nationalist regime, I say: Cast aside your hypocrisy and deceit. Declare yourself on the side of oppression if that is your sincere design. Do not think we will be deceived by your pious protestations as long as you are prepared to condone, assist and actively support the tyranny in our land...No

Elizabeth Elbourne, "Early Khoisan Uses of Mission Christianity", in *Missions and Christianity*, Bredekamp and Ross, 65.

¹⁵ Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, 98.

expression of concern, no platitudes about injustice will content us. The test is action - against oppression.¹⁶

Like King ("I Have a Dream"), Luthuli was an optimist. Luthuli conceived that all human beings, though perhaps at different stages, were naturally progressing forward, for the better, both scientifically and socially. Education, academic and spiritual, was the key to unlocking human potential. Luthuli's optimism perhaps placed a 'brake' on any imprudent impatience for the attainment of human rights through violent means. Luthuli never wavered from his convictions, despite the fact that the National Party regime's intractable racism and thirst for power ultimately undermined at every stage his understanding that history was inevitably progressive. King utilised the Declaration of Independence and the stated ideals of the American dream to persuade others who shared those same ideals yet failed to implement them that equality for African-Americans must be realised. Likewise, what enabled the dynamic between Congregationalism and Luthuli to be reciprocal in nature is that he influenced the western world, Christianity and even Congregationalism in his implementation of their stated ideals. Both tormented by the ideal, Luthuli politically demonstrated Congregationalism on a practical plane and Congregationalism theologically inspired him on an ideal plane.

¹⁶ Luthuli, "No Arms for South Africa: An Appeal from Albert Lutuli", *Peace News Supplement*, 24 May 1963, ii.

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2. I have omitted all extraneous appellations such as 'Press', 'Publishers' and 'Publications'.
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Interviews conducted under the auspices of the Luthuli Museum fell under its code of conduct and procedures.